

THE FLEECING OF GILBERT FENNEL  
By Bailey Millard

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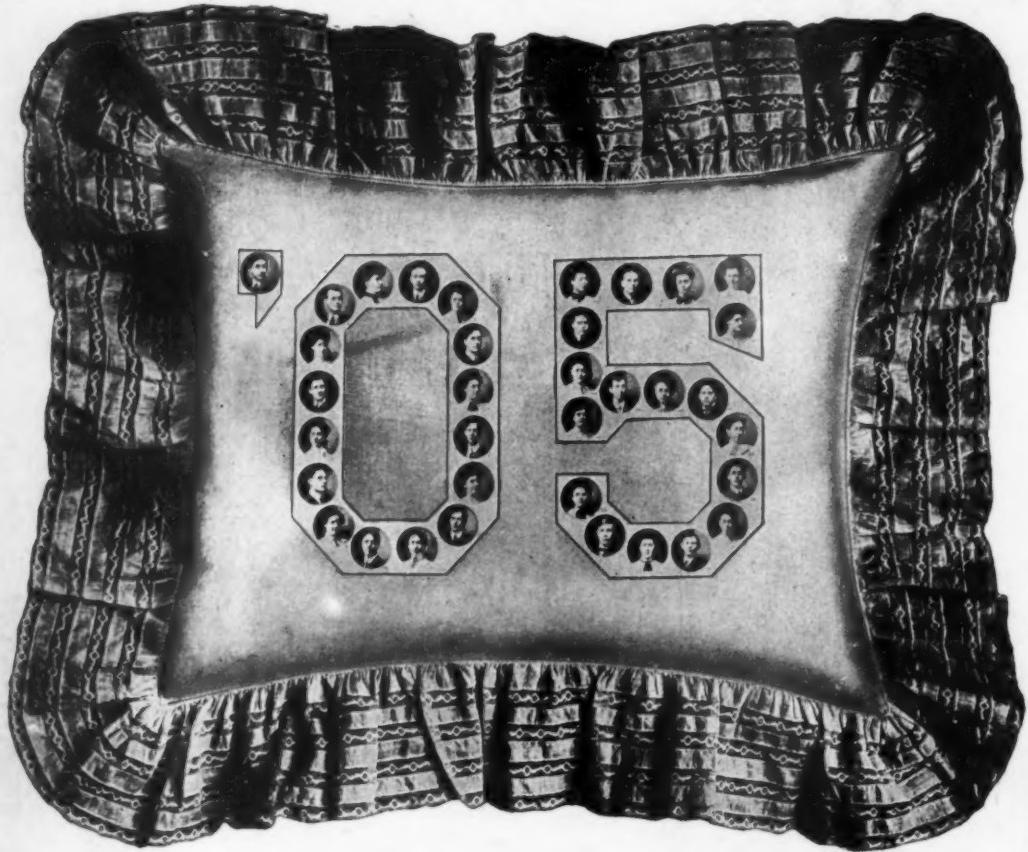
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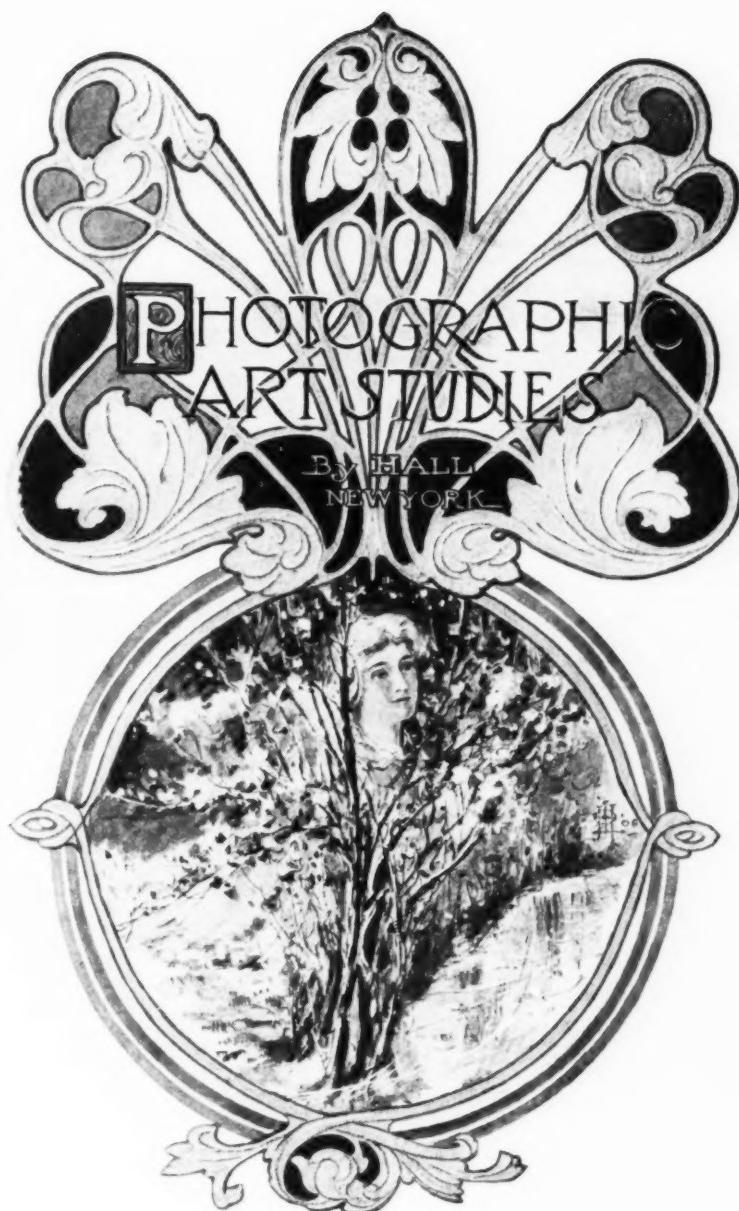
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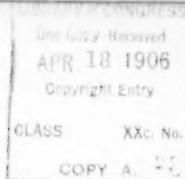
MISS FAY TINCER



DRAWN BY F. DE FOREST SHOOK

"The big eyes shot a questioning glance."

"The Fleecing of Gilbert Fennel," see page 34



# THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE

Vol. VII

May, 1906

No. 1

## The Fleecing of Gilbert Fennel

BY BAILEY MILLARD

When the Nevada line was crossed and the train was panting up a long grade among the sandy hillocks that were the chief features of as dismal a landscape as Mr. Van Dyke or any other desert lover might wish to behold, Gilbert Fennel, lounging in the close-smelling and exceedingly dusty sleeper, drew out his folder for the twentieth time and calculated the distance to Bovine City. Then he frowned, looked out of the window, and frowned again. That the train was late and that it was losing time with every mile did not fret him so much as did those arid hillocks and the terrible patches of alkali that lay between. He was within ten miles of Bovine City and they were desperately sandy miles where they should have been grassy green.

Again he looked at the circular of the "Sunderland Cattle Company of Bovine City, Nevada, U. S. A., Colonel Francis Sunderland, of the Bank of Bovine, president and general manager; office, fifth floor of the Sunderland Building, take elevator," and glanced at the paragraph which stated that "the lovely valley which spreads all about Bovine City for many miles is a beautiful floor of rich, luxuriant grass, in which revel from morn till night the abundantly adiposed herds of the Sunderland Cattle Company."

"Well, perhaps the grass gets thicker as you go on," said Fennel. "America is a most bewildering country anyway." He looked at the circular, admiring the business-like architecture of the seven-story building pictured in half-tone at the top, and called out:

"I say, guard, when do we arrive at Bovine City?"

"'Bout four-thirty," was the conductor's reply. "Should have passed there an hour ago, but we've got three extra sleepers on and can't make time." Then he said under his breath, "Called me a guard. That's the English of it. Guard be hanged!" and slammed the door.

All the passengers save Fennel had given up the landscape as hopeless and were reading, playing cards, or wearing out the hours in train gossip, but he stuck to the window like a life-term convict and made note of every new pile of sand and every new alkali patch. Of grass of any sort he could not discover a spear. There were endless clumps of gray-green sage and greasewood, with an occasional scraggly juniper, and that was all the verdure of which the dull land made boast.

When at last he stood on the platform of Bovine station he stared about in a way that told of mental discomfort. His eye took in the brown depot, the brown section house and the brown freight house, which, so far as he could see, were all there was of Sunderland's "thriving center of commerce and industry." He did not wish to make grins of the smiles of the dusty-whiskered men who sat on the platform steps and who regarded his every movement with pleased attention and with a silence that was impressive, by asking the way to the Sunderland Building. But he inquired if there was such a person as Colonel Francis Sunderland in the vicinity. Then the men were

## THE RED BOOK

all agrin and one of them guffawed.

"Have I said anything particularly humorous?" was Fennel's inquiry, which did not sound so crushing as was intended.

"Lookin' for a man named Sunderland?" spoke up one lounging, a lantern-jawed man with a very heavy black moustache and a rank growth of stubble on his face, edging away from the rest and drawing near to Fennel. "Wal, you'll look a good while."

"He doesn't live here?"

"No, not him."

"Where does he live, then?"

"Wal," said the Bovine man, lowering his voice to a tone of confidence, at the same time showing a pitying interest, "if you're another one of 'em and they've got your money and you've got their stock, I guess you're entitled to know all there is to know. You'd better see Miss Milburn. You was in the scheme, was you, or thought you was?"

"I hold one thousand shares of stock in the Sunderland Cattle Syndicate," confessed Fennel, "but who is Miss Milburn?"

"Miss Helen Milburn. She's the only one that knows ary thing 'bout Sunderland, so they say. Her place is down the Pilot Peak road. Quite a collection o' houses down that way and a store and s'loon. It's the town and this here is the station—only 'bout a mile away. That's the road right there. Never tell nobody I put you on, and don't talk no more here 'bout this thing, cause these fellers might tell Miss Milburn and she'd kill me."

The last sentence would have been regarded by an American as purely ornamental, but Fennel was innocently interested and not a little alarmed.

"So she kills people, does she?" The weight in his hip pocket seemed comforting.

Picking up his Gladstone and telling the station agent to store his other luggage until asked for, he strode through the white dust toward the town. It was a long mile, and the local pride of the place would never have exacted the remark from anybody that the town was worth walking that far to see. At the end of the mile there were a dozen habitations, nearly all of the shack order, ranged

along the straggling road, while two larger false-front buildings, in which were the saloon and store, were a hollow mockery of metropolitan pretensions. Old Freese, the saloon-keeper, took boarders and lodgers, which settled the question of Fennel's stay in Bovine. As for Miss Milburn, he lost no time in finding her. The shake-roof dwelling that was pointed out as hers was the end house of the village. It had a neater, quieter air than the others, but it was rough and unpainted like the rest.

As Fennel paused at the open doorway he heard the click-click of a typewriter and as he knocked caught the turn of a girl's head and the shuffling of something under the cloth on the table. The face he had seen was fair and the hair wondrously dark, while the eyes were big, black, and lustrous. There was a rustling out of sight and a darting into view again, and there she was in the doorway, as cool and queenly as a grand dame in a drawing room.

"Miss Milburn?"

"Yes." It was a pretty "yes," and there was much inquiry in the big eyes.

"My name is Fennel—Gilbert Fennel—of Birmingham, England, and I've come to see about Colonel Sunderland and his Cattle Syndicate. I'm told that you know more about them than anyone else in this 'thriving center of commerce and industry.' "

At the quoted words, defiance shot from the big eyes and the round cheek flushed.

"Who told you I knew anything of Colonel Sunderland or his affairs?"

"Why, I—that is, I—am most credibly informed that—that you know all about them."

"It's a mistake, I'm sure," she said more mildly. "It's all a mistake. I know no such person as Colonel Sunderland."

"Very sorry to have disturbed you then, very sorry."

"Oh, it's nothing at all." And a cheery smile played across the face, chasing the flush away.

Fennel was just ready to say "Good afternoon" in his politest tone when a dust-devil rose of a sudden and the wind

## THE FLEECING OF GILBERT FENNEL

33

whisked past the door in one of those freaky moods that it takes sometimes on the desert. There was a rustling and fluttering of leaves inside the house, and as the storm of sand and powdery dust passed away, leaving the Englishman's eyes clear but with gritty lids, he saw swirling about the young woman sheet after sheet of circulars and letter heads, each topped by the seven-story Sunderland Building of Bovine City.

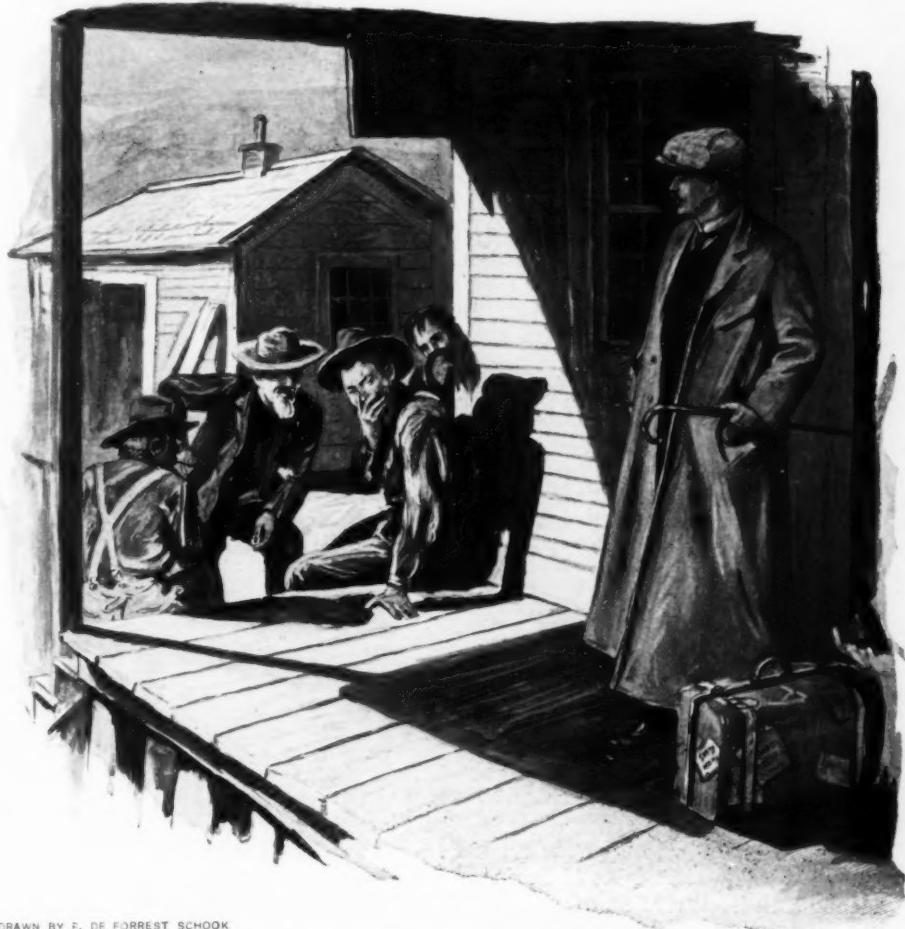
The girl's face went pink and then pale and she made a vain effort to cover the scattered leaves with her skirt. She saw Fennel stoop to pick up one of them lying at his feet and she tried to snatch it from his hand, but he drew it back quickly and

said firmly but with sympathetic regard for her embarrassment:

"I think I have seen this before." And he drew from his pocket a creased and worn copy of the circular. "Yes," he said, holding the fresh leaf beyond her reach, while he scanned it with upturned eyes, "yes, it's the same. Wculdn't you better confess now, Miss Milburn, and tell me where I'm to find the colonel?"

"He's not here," she gasped brokenly. "He's gone to Chicago."

"Indeed. Then I would better have cut short my trip and saved nearly two thousand miles of travel. But," and he looked at her with just a shade of pity, "why didn't you tell me at first that you did



DRAWN BY F. DE FOREST SCHOOK

"Have I said anything particularly humorous?"

## THE RED BOOK

know Colonel Sunderland and where he had gone?"

"Because I really don't know him and I'm requested not to tell."

"Yes, I presume he doesn't want everybody to know where he can be found, if this is his seven-story office."

His glance of fine contempt at the cabin and about the town aroused what there was of fighting spirit in her.

"Did you come all the way from your wonderful island to find marble halls in the desert?" And she returned with interest the look of contempt.

"Well, no—not exactly. I had a bit of suspicion that it might not be all right, particularly as no reply was made to my last letter of inquiry, and so I came out to make a study of the great American swindle, as represented by the Sunderland Cattle Company, and incidentally to thrash the swindler."

"Thrash him? Are you confident of your ability?"

It seemed a real western girl that spoke. At first she had not looked it.

"Well, we shall see? When will he return?"

"I cannot tell; it may be a long time."

"Very well. I shall be around here for a while. I am in no hurry. I can wait. Good day, Miss Milburn."

He lifted his hat and she smiled a strange smile, which, if it meant anything, meant hostility.

Fennel went over to what he called "the inn" and, sitting in a rawhide-bottomed chair on the rough porch, smoked his straight-stemmed pipe fiercely for awhile. Then he went abroad and asked more questions in a half-hour than the Bovine people could have answered in a week. There was a man at Elko who knew a great deal about Sunderland, he learned, and so he took the night train for Elko, coming back next day after a hard hunt for his man, with the inert and indigestible information that Sunderland was a big fraud who had bilked lots of people, and that there wasn't a cattle range within eight miles of Bovine. Evidently Mis Helen Milburn was the only person who could give him such word of the colonel as he sought. He

tried not to think, but it was present to him, that those pure black eyes were still lending themselves to deceit and that the colonel was still hovering about, keeping out of the way of his victims. The stories told by the people cross-hatched like the shading in a bad pencil sketch, and the truth could not lie in a Bovine well, for there was no well there, the water used by the inhabitants being hauled in a tank car for thirty miles.

Going over to the mysterious office of the great Cattle Syndicate, Fennel received no answer to his knock, and looking up, observed that the window shades were closely drawn. He thought Helen's "not at home" was another trick, but, reflecting that he had ample leisure and could wait a month to see her if he listed, he wandered down a by-path among the sand hills, breathing with grateful lungs the fine, heady air of the desert. He smote with his stick the gray sage leaves along the trail, feeling, as he imagined, the lawlessness of the western wilds.

Suddenly he came upon Helen. She was sitting on a sage hummock, book in hand. Her back was toward him, and as he stole up, he saw that the thick Tennyson was open at "Geraint." He stepped back and coughed. She started and the big eyes shot a questioning glance from under the black, wind-tossed wisp of hair.

"Good morning, Miss Milburn. Just called at your house. So you are not shamming absence, after all?" he said.

"No; why should I?"

"Why, I thought—"

"You thought that I was afraid of you—that I was keeping out of your way?" What a pretty savage she could be.

"Nothing of the kind, I assure you. Do you like Tenny?"

"Tenny? Please don't clip the great poet's name that way. It seems barbarous."

He smiled cheaply.

"And I have come away out here," he said looking about the desolate waste, "to learn what barbarity is."

"You have never read 'Geraint' or you would not speak so lightly of your great singer."

"That's true. I own up to the charge."

"Nor the 'Princess' either, I should say."

"Oh, I've glanced it over, but it's not much in my line."

"And you sit in judgment on our savagery? I suppose there are lots of Englishmen like you."

"I dare say." He dropped his cane and took the book from her hand. "By your leave, Miss Milburn," he said.

"Certainly," she permitted, rising from the hummock and taking a few aimless steps toward a mesquite bush. Then she screamed, for at her feet lay a coil of browns, with tongue of flame playing above it. She seemed unable to move, and twice the flame darted almost to her skirt. He sprang to her side, pushed her away and stamped vigorously upon the coil.

"Don't! For heaven's sake don't, Mr. Fennel! Take your stick!"

She flurried about, grasped the stick, and handed it to him.

"Oh, he's dead enough now," said Fennel. "That last stamp crushed his head. What kind of a snake do you call that?"

"Why, didn't you hear? A rattle-snake. Oh, it was just horrid! I thought you had never seen one before by the way you sprang upon it. You must never do that. It might have bitten you."

"Well, he did peck me a bit." He bent low over his right foot and examined his ankle with exasperating deliberation. She fluttered about nervously, regarding the ankle.

"Run!" she screamed. "Run! You must get whiskey at once. Run for Freese's!"

He looked at her with British density, with which she was wildly impatient, and with British coolness for which she could not help showing admiration. Then he handed her the Tennyson with a bow, took his cane and strode off. She ran after him, crying, "Hurry! hurry!" and would have pushed him on, but he kept up an even stride, and it seemed to her an hour before they reached Freese's.

"He's bitten by a rattlesnake," she cried to Freese. "He's bitten. Do what you can for him at once."

Old Freese, a thickset Scotchman with a tangled mane and a squint in his left

eye, rushed in and grasped a black bottle from the bar.

"Good day, Miss Milburn," said Fennel, lifting his hat in the door of the bar-room and going inside with most aggravating slowness. She went away, but came back and hovered about the place all the evening. Not until Freese told her that the victory of the still's poison over the snake's was decisively won did she go to her cottage and her supper.

Fennel was out again in a day or two, not much the worse for his misadventure, his stomach seeming proof against the smoky "Scotch" which Freese had poured into it. He had missed something during those long indoor hours, and, as his feet strayed toward Helen's cottage he felt that that something was Helen. But he argued that this was supremely foolish and went by the cottage without so much as a turn of the head. Coming back in the soft air of the evening, he stopped at her door. His knock was answered by a stout woman in a red "Mother Hubbard" from whom he learned that Miss Milburn had gone to Elko. She had business there that might keep her away a week. To know what that business was Fennel would have given much. He thought it might be connected with the syndicate. In concluding that it might be well for him to go again to Elko he tried to make himself believe that his proposed visit was merely to subserve his business interests. Before the train had borne him half-way there, however, he found himself deeply engrossed in conjectures as to Helen's relations with the syndicate, leaving his own unprofitable connection with it entirely out of the question.

Elko was a rough frontier town, not so large but that he was able to discover Helen's whereabouts in less than half an hour after his arrival. He saw her coming down the stairs leading from a lawyer's office. She was dressed in a dark brown gown of trim cut and her eyes looked blacker and fuller than ever. She met him with a flurry of surprise. She seemed to have a shrewd idea that he had followed her there in the capacity of amateur detective.

"You didn't like Bovine," she remarked in the course of their talk. "Well, I don't blame you. Elko is livelier; but the civilization here is hardly up to the London standard, is it?"

"You have been in London?"

"Oh, yes—with mamma—three years ago. Our home was in Boston then. That was just before papa failed."

She was charmingly confidential today. Perhaps she would tell how she chanced to come West. He asked her and was answered by a pained look that made him angry with himself for his pointed interrogation. He tried commonplaces, which seemed to suit better. She was quite a friendly and companionable girl after all, in spite of her reserves, and seemed not to have dreamed of the spell she was casting upon him.

They continued their walk until they had passed out of the straggling town and along down the road. She evidently had forgotten that she had started for the house of the friend with whom she was spending the week. From commonplaces they had gone to books, on which she talked freest. It was part of her Boston nature, he thought, and he humored her. A barbed-wire fence ran along one side of the rutty road, blurring out on the low skyline behind which a red sun was sinking. What the fence was there for was a mystery, as nothing grew inside of it but sagebrush and stunted junipers, while here and there ran great streaks of alkali that whitened and encrusted the baked earth. It was a view into which the talk of books fitted not at all, he thought. He looked at her ripe, red lips and at her daintily rounded cheeks and did not follow where she led into the land of Emerson and Lowell. What a pretty turn of the subject he could make, was his thought. Should he take the plunge? She picked modestly at Ruskin while he thought it out. It might be all very well if she would explain her connection with the Sunderland Company. He longed to urge the question upon her, but he saw the uselessness of it, and he sighed.

"You are tired of this talk," she said. "It is stupid. Why, we have come a long

way. I must get back to Mrs. Chamberlain's."

They turned and walked into the town.

Next morning the folly of it all smote Fennel harshly. When he viewed his prospects for the next London season Helen was simply out of the question. She was impossible. He would go back to Bovine and await the arrival of the man, whoever he was, who was the head and front of the offending syndicate.

He was at Bovine four days before she returned. On the evening of her arrival he went down to the cottage. The night was warm and the front window was open. He was about to knock, when through the casement he heard his own name repeated twice in a low-pitched voice, that of a man and a stranger.

"Fennel—Fennel? He's that Birmingham chap, isn't he—the man who wrote with a hot pen to inquire about his investment? Well, he's only in for ten thousand. No doubt rich enough, too, and can stand it. I sha'n't show myself to him in a hurry, anyway. No, sis; I ain't hungry: tackled the diner just before I got off the train."

Fennel, ashamed of his prying position, hesitated between retreat and advance, but seemed bound to listen, in spite of himself.

"Where are you from this time?" came in Helen's clear voice, and rather severely.

Fennel hated himself for eavesdropping then, but he excused it on the ground of detective work in his own interest.

"Salt Lake," the man said. "They got on to my corn land scheme at Laramie, so I sought a less tropical clime. But I've got something good in Mormontown."

"Another 'scheme,' as you call it? I should think, Robert Woodbury, that you would want to get well out of one scheme before you were into another. Don't you think the holders of the Sunderland Syndicate stock will run you down yet? I'm sure they ought to."

The man laughed a round laugh. "Do you know what they call it in Salt Lake?" he asked. "The Sagebrush Syndicate. They look upon it there as one of the institutions of the country. I caught a

## THE FLEECING OF GILBERT FENNEL

37



DRAWN BY F. DE FOREST SHOOK

"'He's bitten by a rattlesnake,' she cried."

Dutch Baron on some of that stock the other day—cinched him for five thousand. Don't look so sour, my girl. You know I never go after any but those who have money to burn ice with."

He glanced at a shelf near at hand.

"Why, Nell! You haven't sent out

that last batch of circulars yet."

"No, I haven't. I've done with this business. I've struck. I'm through with it all." From severity the voice ranged to weariness. There was a pathetic note in it.

"That's right. Now quote the cheap

melodrama on me, why don't you? 'Get some one else to do your devil's work, Guy Darrell,' and all that. Look here, Helen, what's the matter with you? Where's all your new Western spirit gone? When did you begin to teach Sunday school?"

"You must have been drinking or you would not talk so," she said with a fine tone of scorn. "You have tried from the first to make me a party to this—this fraud. But from the time that I began to see it for what it was you did not succeed. When, at your brotherly request, I came out into this wilderness, it was merely to be secretary to you and your partner, Colonel Sunderland. It was not long before I found out that Colonel Sunderland was a myth and that instead of being a silent partner you were, as you owned up, the 'whole works.' I saw a good many strange transactions carried on in your correspondence, but I did not know the ways of the West, as you did, and tried to think those doings were right, though they were always on my conscience. Then came the John L. Kimball affair, from the consequences of which you fled, leaving me to face the victim. You have been gone from here ever since that time—it's four months now—and I have stayed here and waited, not knowing where you were. Robert, this is a terrible business. Why can't you get into something else—something legitimate?"

"But you had money—you could have gone home," he said in a relentless tone, not heeding her question.

"You think I'm really as bad as that, do you, Robert Woodbury—that I would use a dollar of that money for myself?"

"Well, how have you lived then?"

"Oh, I have managed. I have done some typewriting for an Elko lawyer. I haven't been here at Bovine all of the time. By the first of the month I shall have enough money to buy me a ticket back to Boston."

"Helen, you're 'way off," said Woodbury in tones not quite so suggestive of the dry-goods drummer as those of the rest of his speech. "You're not onto the thing. There's no real fraud about

it. Kimball wasn't defrauded, nor was any of them. You women don't understand these affairs. They went into the syndicate scheme with their eyes open. Now, about Sunderland, he was no myth. He started this whole business. We ought to be thankful to him. He let me in on the ground floor and then went off to Chicago and died of jim-jams. He was a good fellow. People around here didn't know him. He started this scheme up on Weaver River and I moved it down here nearer the railroad after he died. It's all right, my girl. You come to Salt Lake with me and help me out, and in less than a year you'll be wearing diamonds."

"Ts-s-s! Go away and leave me. Mrs. Briggs will be here soon. She lives with me now. You'd better not be seen here."

"All right, sis. It's near train time. Hope you'll see things in their true light before long. Good-bye! I'll write from Salt Lake. Remember, you can come any time you want."

The door opened and a mellow light shone forth. Fennel drew back into the shadow, but he did not miss the last fling from Woodbury.

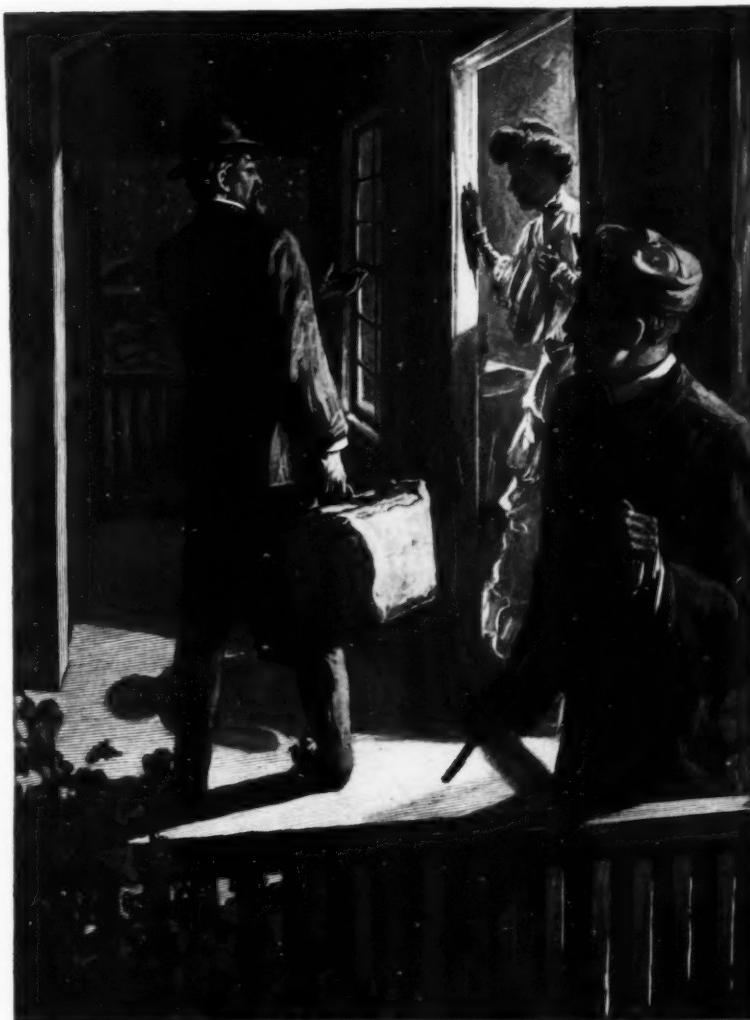
"I know what's come over you," he said, standing in the door and looking back. "I heard it up at the station. It's 'Is 'Ighness at Freese's—the man that didn't have any better sense than to jump onto a sidewinder with both feet. He got bit twice by Bovine, didn't he? Ha! ha! Once by the syndicate and once by a rattler. You and he were out walking, I'm told. Oh, sis, I wouldn't have believed it of you, but your pretty blush tells me it's so!"

She did not reply.

"Well, good bye. Going to take the train now. Mind, I don't give you up yet. Bye-bye!"

Fennel heard her foot stamp the floor and then there was a burst of sobs. He wanted to run after Woodbury and strangle him and trample on him in the road. But—had he not called her sister? Biting his lips, he paced up and down. Soon he found himself before the door again.

"Go away. I never want to see you



DRAWN BY F. DE FOREST SCHOOL

"I know what's come over you. I heard it at the station."

again," was the reply to his knock.  
"There's the cane you forgot."

She came to the window and handed out a walking-stick. Then she cried:

"Oh, it's you! I beg pardon. I thought—" And there was a world of change in her tone—such a softening! When she asked him in, her air was that of one for whom the sky has cleared. Her note was distinctly friendly and her words lacked nothing of interest.

His stay was short. He went away hastily and rather dizzily. He seemed

in full accord with the world and found himself getting much profit out of life. The big moon just rising over the jag-toothed range, smiled and smiled.

It did not please him, however, when he learned on the following day that she had gone to Elko again, taking her typewriter and all her other belongings. Mrs. Briggs said she was gone for good. She would leave Elko in a day or two for her old home in Boston—"back in God's country," she phrased it.

## THE RED BOOK

He did not go to Elko at once, as his heart told him to do. He did not like to seem to be pursuing her. But it was wretchedly dull at Bovine, and he had no further business there, that he could see. In his ruminating moments he charged himself with having let slip the last opportunity to straighten out the syndicate tangle. He had let that rascally Robert Woodbury get away from him. He saw that his mission to the West was a profitless one. He had a mind to go to Salt Lake and search out the schemer, who, he urged to himself bitterly, should not go unpunished. It all ended in his going to the station to take the train for Elko, and after a half hour he found himself very intent upon getting there and accusative of his delay in setting out.

His train stopped at a siding, where he saw another express heading eastward. He was watching it pass slowly and was thinking how un-English the cars were and the whole system of American railroading, when he saw the familiar face of a girl at the window of one of the passing cars—Helen Milburn's. She was going East—no doubt to Boston. He signalled wildly, but she did not see him. Then, unmindful of luggage, of everything, he rushed from the door and sprang upon the platform of the last of the passing cars. He was glad now it was an American train, for he could go the whole length of it at will. In the end of the third car he found Helen, all alone. She glanced up at him over the top of her newspaper. She seemed pleased to see him.

"So you're going to Boston," he said, "and you've got this big carriage all to yourself."

"Yes; I'm through with that wretched work. I'm going back where there's something worth striving for."

"You don't like the Cattle Syndicate business then?" he replied idly.

"No—you know I don't," she said reproachfully. "And you know it was all a fraud."

"Yes, it was a fraud. I am schooled up to that knowledge. I've had an expensive tuition."

"I—I am very sorry," she said, with humid eyes, for the syndicate swindle now

seemed to her more desperately wicked than ever. "But I haven't the slightest hope you'll believe me when I say I never had any idea of the true nature of the affair until the other day. I had always been made to believe that all those thousands of cattle over on the Big Meadows belonged to the syndicate."

"Whose are they?"

"They belong to the Wardlow outfit."

"But the seven-story building?"

"Yes, I knew that was a sham. But it was only a detail. I was told that it was projected and would be built later."

"Who told you that—Mr. Robert Woodbury?"

"Yes," she admitted, looking at him inquiringly.

"Is that his true name? He's your brother, isn't he?"

"It's his true name, but he's no relation of mine; that is, none that I am willing to own. He married my half-sister, who died two years ago."

His long, heavy respiration spoke of the relief of a tortured mind. He looked at her with a clear, bright gaze.

"Then you really weren't in it and weren't related to that swindler? I'm so glad! And you're going back to Boston? Do you mind telling me your plans? You don't know how interested I am."

"Well," she said, with a smile, not daring to own to herself what his words meant to her, "when I go back I shall try to work my way through the conservatory and then teach music for a living."

"That's a pretty hard program, I'm afraid," he said with a world of sympathy in his tone.

"Yes, but it's an agreeable one to a person who has been as wretched as I have of late," she replied, with her head bent down.

"I know—a better plan—than that."

His speech limped and halted. Something in his tone made her bend lower and her eyes sought the paper in her lap.

"You know what—what I mean," he said. "It is—to—to—in short, to marry me."

Her eyes were still upon the paper and her face was rose-colored and radiant.

He edged along the seat and his big hand dropped upon her little one.

"Don't," she said, flushing still deeper and drawing away. "The porter will see you."

"I don't care if he does, and there's nobody else in the carriage. Shouldn't you fancy a pretty villa near Birmingham, with great oaks all around it, a sweet little box of a lodge, a dog cart, a victoria, and a few good riding horses, with a run up to London now and again?"

"It does sound better than Bovine City," she admitted, with a smile.

The big hand adventured forth again and captured the little one where it lay under the outspread paper. And this

time the little hand did not resist, but lay quietly, in willing captivity.

"But I should think," she said, after a while, "that your experience with one American fraud would make you beware of another."

He looked at her with a puzzled air, and then, as his slow British apprehension laid hold upon her meaning, he said:

"Oh, but the other was a case where I let somebody else manage for me. This is to be a close corporation in which I am to have the controlling interest."

The big hand squeezed the little one under the newspaper, and the little one gently returned the pressure.

"That does make a difference," said she.

## The Success of Sykes

BY I. K. FRIEDMAN

I have some reverence for art myself; I never could write down to the level of the common herd, never save once, and I've been punished sufficiently for that single transgression; my conscience hurts me every time I deposit a check in the bank or go out for a ride in my yacht. It was all Harrington's fault, anyway; he tempted me. I was just as happy in my dire poverty and my old clothes as I could be, when he came around, flashed fat checks in front of my eyes, and remarked not once—but once every six months when his royalties were remitted:

"Sykes, you're an idiot—a blank idiot. It may be all right to play Balzac, live on coffee and debts and keep on writing what no one, save a few old maids and spectacled book-worms, wants to read; but I can't see the fun in it myself. Maybe you'll be famous when you're dead and I'll be forgotten along about that time, but I don't believe that your tombstone will go on a frolic to celebrate the fun you've missed."

"I would rather starve," I protested, "than lower myself by writing a book like 'All For Love.' "

"Now in its four hundredth thousand," grinned Harrington, who was its author.

"I guess there are that many street car conductors and shop girls in America," I retorted.

"I wish the number would hurry up and increase to a billion," he sighed. "I have my eyes on an estate in the Adirondacks and a house in Central Park, West!"

I winced; we were after the same girl, and, in a way, which was absurd, each of us pretended that the other wasn't in the secret. The chances were in his favor just now, I feared. Fanny Foster was literary—she had published a volume of poems privately (so privately that nobody but her father who paid the bills knew anything about it) and she doted on authors. I had things my own way until Harrington came along; she believed in me and she was willing to wait for the distant day when the world would make amends for neglecting my genius. But Harrington was not only better looking than I—he just misses being handsome—he was an author, and a successful one in the bargain. Fanny was human and it flattered her to have Harrington at her feet—Harrington at whose feet groveled three or four hundred thousand people—mostly fools, if I do say so myself.

## THE RED BOOK

Besides, I have a sneaking suspicion that when Harrington took Fanny to the opera or to Rejane or Bernhardt, where he looked owl-wise among the audience and didn't understand a word of what was doing on the stage, he managed to let her believe that if a man had literary merit the world would find it out quicker than a woman learns about a bargain in remnants. Just look at him! He didn't claim he was George Meredith or Henry James or Thomas Hardy, oh, no! but he wasn't the man to sit around and whine about the stupidity of the universe just because no one but himself and some old college professors found genius in his books. Harrington talks ever so much better than he writes, while I—in all candor—write ever so much better than I can talk, which is fortunate or I never should have found a publisher. Well, you know what that sort of thing does to a girl if persisted in long enough, especially if she happens to be just bright and not especially deep. I never cared for deep women; I've depth enough for two and the intellectuals bore me. When I'm through work I like to be amused; I want to forget I've been toiling over a masterpiece that the ignorant masses won't read until I'm dead and my heirs are celebrating my memory with the royalties; and Fanny was the most amusing, vivacious, lively girl I ever met in all my life. I'm inclined to be serious; existence is no joke for me—it isn't for anybody who has to worry about the holes in the soles of his shoes—but she had the faculty of making me laugh until my sides ached. She used to say that Harrington amused her while she amused me, and I'm still figuring out whether or not that was to my advantage or his. If I laughed at her capers it must have flattered her—just find me the woman that doesn't like flattery and I'll find you the author that hates fifteenth editions—and if Harrington persuaded her to chuckle at his jokes—I could no more see his humor than his pathos—he must have hoaxed her into the absolutely false notion that he was good company and that he lavished on her all the wit he begrudging his lucubrations.

At any rate, when Harrington bobbed

up on the scene and tagged at Fanny's heels—that man never knew or cared whether or not he was wanted—I noticed a difference in her attitude towards me. Not that she was cold or that she treated me less considerately than before; no, not at all, she was as warm-hearted and kindly as ever; only, when I began to expatiate on genius in a garret and charlatany in a chateau, she didn't bubble over, look sympathetic, and encourage me to persist and persist until a hard world contritely acknowledged its mistake. No, she looked bored when I aired that musty theme, and she changed the subject, without quoting the early privations of Balzac (I told her about them in the first place) for my particular consolation. It flatters a man to have his poverty compared to that of one of the first-raters, for the implication is, if he equals a recognized genius in what he hasn't he must resemble him in what he has; sometimes this logic holds good and sometimes it is as false as one of Cleopatra's smiles; whether or not it is meretricious in my case I refer you to "In the Darkness," "Out of the Pit," "His Brother's Keeper," etc., etc.

What hurt me most—and I'm not what you call a sensitive man—was the remark with which Fanny cut short my justified assailment of the illiterate, ignorant masses that let the sale of Harrington's last book, "Sweet Lavender's Loves," run up so high that the presses got the side-ache in their efforts to keep abreast of it. What was the remark? I assure you I haven't forgotten it and I never will forget it, although I pretended at the time that I didn't care particularly, which was quite tactful of me.

"There must be considerable virtue in a book that meets with such a hearty response; it must satisfy some deep human need," she remarked.

"The need for bosh and cheap sentimentality," I explained.

"Well, then," asserted she a bit haughtily—which is what stung—"if it's so awfully easy why don't you write a book like 'Sweet Lavender's Loves'?"

"Fortunately, I haven't that sort of a mind," I declared, which let Harrington down charitably. I was on the point of adding, "Thank God," as a snapper to



DRAWN BY ANGUS MAC DONALL

"She kept sniffing aggravatingly at a bouquet of violets." See page 44

## THE RED BOOK

the lash, but I caught myself in time.

"Unfortunately," she insisted. I wondered at her. Harrington must have been unusually eloquent that week; he had had her out in his automobile four times, and the best I could offer was a walk in Central Park, when it was nasty under-foot.

I demonstrated how fortunate it was for my career, for my future, for my eternal fame, that I couldn't and wouldn't haul myself down to write a book that flung insults in the face of all the canons of art, but she stubbornly refused to follow my argument. She kept sniffing aggravatingly at a bouquet of violets, which my trembling heart told me represented the royalties on twenty-five copies of "Sweet Lavender's Loves." I admire the boldness of a man who can turn an artistic sin of that description into violets; and I should have liked to say what I thought of the literary discrimination of the young lady who accepted the innocent flowers, but I deemed it more noble to hold my peace and suffer in silence. Few know the pangs and trials of genius in this mundane sphere, and it may be just as well, or there wouldn't be much commiseration left for hospitals, orphan asylums and other institutions that need it more.

Harrington came around to see me in my squalid den that night—I suspect the evil one suggested the visit—and he was in high feather, as became an author whose book is on the way to a million when he calls on a brother whose book is on the road to oblivion. There was a look in his round jolly face that rasped my nerves; it wasn't fictive jealousy, so to say, not a bit of it; if literature chooses to crown rot and consign masterpieces to the shelves of the second-hand dealers, let the fault lie with the muses; I wash my hands of it and gaze at Balzac's portrait for spiritual encouragement. No, it wasn't "Sweet Lavender's Loves" that stung and mortified one-half so much as the loves of Fanny Foster—the genuine love of a real character that I feared was being misplaced and thrown away.

Harrington might just as well have said—it was all written so legibly on his exuberant and self-satisfied countenance—

"Sykes, my boy, I'm going to propose tomorrow to the finest, sweetest, best, and most intellectual girl in the world, and I won't be refused either. She knows a good thing when she sees it. I'm the man who wrote, "All for Love," now in its umpteenth thousand, and "The Loves of Sweet Lavender," which has gone so high that I don't weary myself in trying to keep track of it. I'm sorry for you, Sykes, but is it my fault if I was born your intellectual superior?"

What he actually did say when he quieted down and lit a cigar—no pipe for him, he didn't like the smell—was: "I'll have the Adirondack estate; I've got an agent figuring on it now."

"Name it 'Fool's Paradise,' after the nameless, numberless fools who gave it to you," I suggested. I was intimate enough with Harrington to say anything I chose to his face; although, as Fanny will bear me out, I'm very cautious what I say about him.

"Thanks," he laughed, "I'll keep a spare room for you the year around."

"I'd feel out of place," I retorted; "how in the deuce could a man like me write there?"

"What's the difference where you write," he puffed out, "I don't see, when what you write doesn't sell anyway. You might just as well not write at all, according to my notion."

"I write for my own satisfaction," I interposed.

"It looks that way," he smiled, jingling his gold pieces and looking around my denuded den disparagingly.

"Balzac—" I started.

"Another poor devil!" he interrupted.

It's useless to argue with a man of that caliber; you can't convince him; he's one of those artisans of literature who can no more understand its divine and inspired artists than a house-painter can appreciate the aims and ideals of a Michael Angelo. I read him the first chapter from the manuscript of my uncompleted "Belknap's Failure," as an antidote for his philistinism; but he didn't appreciate the honor in the least, for he yawned in my face and remarked when I had done,

"It may be literature, but you'll be

lucky to get the cost of the paper back. It's just as solid, dignified, and dry as calculus; I don't doubt that your old professor of mathematics will wire you his thanks and congratulations for the autographed copy; but the people who buy books aren't going to take a preliminary course in elementary subjects to educate themselves up to what you think you're driving at."

"I make my appeal to the discriminating few," I replied witheringly.

"If they were only as generous as they are scarce," he retorted blandly, "you might be justified in your recklessness. It's all right for a banker to indulge in his hobbies; but an author ought to have an eye open for business. Look here, old man," he burst out suddenly, "you expect to get married some day, don't you?"

He took my breath away; I admired his cunning tactics. I wished that I might have half his coolness, a third of his effrontery, and a tenth of his impudence—more might prove fatal—but not all gifts are vouchsafed all men. If he expected to find out from me where I stood with Fanny Foster before he took the fatal plunge he was mightily mistaken; he wasn't dealing with a credulous public now, but with an individual who paid the taxes and enjoyed the privileges of brains.

"Why," answered I, after turning the matter over in my mind, "there are days when I get a trifle lonely and think it would be kind of nice to ask some bright little woman to divide the joys and perquisites of authorship with me."

"She'll have to rent a microscope to see her end of the perquisites, I'm thinking," he guffawed, just as if he weren't disappointed by what I didn't divulge. "I tell you for the last time, Sykes, you're an ass. You can't ask any woman to starve to death with you; it's brutal, it's selfish, it's expecting too much. It's all right to chase will-o'-the-wisps when you're single and to delude yourself with the notion that you're a Balzac in disguise and all that rot; but when a man wants to marry he has to take the woman into consideration."

"So I do," I posited. "The woman

I marry will share my ideals."

"Hand out the butcher a couple of those shares and see what he'll hand back in the shape of steaks and chops."

"I'm a vegetarian," I explained.

"I don't care what you are, you come nearer being everything that doesn't pay than any man I ever knew, but for heaven's sake, listen to common sense before your hair gets gray and it's too late."

He drew a letter out of his pocket, and in silence I wondered what game he was for playing on me now.

"My publishers," he went on, glancing over the type-written communication, "wish that I would give them another big seller like 'The Loves of Sweet Lavender,' but the trouble is that they're afraid if I put another book on the market this year it will divert the public's attention from Lavender and so—"

"Oh, they needn't be afraid," I interrupted, "you can't keep on doing as bad as that."

"So," he continued, not heeding me, "they want me to write a book for immediate publication and sign it with an assumed name. They agree to pay a big sum down and keep the books running at somewhere near the same speed."

"Evidently Lincoln was wrong," I observed, "It seems that you can fool all of the people all of the time. Advertising has changed the aspect of things, though, since the war president's time."

He paid no more attention to me than if this wise observation had merely been passed in the silence of my own brain.

"Now, then, Sykes, here's your chance. I'm tired; I don't fancy buckling down to work just now, and I want to have some fun spending the money I've made. Besides, I haven't got an idea in my head. Oh, you needn't laugh. I know I never had one, and I am aware that literature isn't going into hysterics on that account and that the public is to be congratulated. All the same, here's your chance. Keep your name out of it if you like, but take the 'Loves of Lavender' for a model and turn out a counterpart. Will you do it?"

"I should say not!" I roared. "Do

you want me to ruin my style? I'm an author, not a copying clerk."

"I advise you," he remarked calmly, "to throw your false pride and not your chance of clearing fifty thousand dollars into the waste paper basket."

"More literature has gone into that waste paper basket than into any of your books," I retorted.

"Good night, Sykes, I'll come back to argue the question with you when you lapse back into sanity," he growled.

He slammed the door and left. It's wonderful how conceited a man gets when his books happen to sell. Fanny's challenge ran through my distressed mind;

I pictured Harrington as my successful and taunting rival; I saw him mounting his automobile with her and riding away—neither of them ever to return in the single state. It was too much for even my iron will and high purposes and lofty ideals. I ran to the door, opened it, and bawled down the staircase,

"Oh, Harrington. Satan's got me at last! I'll sell my soul and my style to you for a mess of sweet lavender. It's awful—but come back and repeat the seductive offer."

"I congratulate you," he puffed, clambering upwards. We sat in consultation until one o'clock that night, arranging



DRAWN BY ANGUS MAC DONALL

"We sat in consultation till one o'clock that night."

the business details and roughly outlining one of his now-I-love-you-now-I-love-the-other-fellow plots. "Let yourself go for all you're worth, which isn't much," was his final admonition. "Never forget, for a moment, for a sentence, for a page, for a chapter that your heroine is in love—"

"With three hundred thousand street car conductors," I interjected.

"If you do you're lost with—"

"Three hundred thousand shop and servant girls," I stated.

"Well, if you know more about it than I do," he thundered, "go your own foolish way and finish the last chapter of 'Belknap's Failure' in the poor-house."

I laid my hand on his shoulder mollifyingly. "Don't be hard on me, Harrington, be merciful. Put yourself in my shoes. Supposing you had literary gifts, a fine imagination, a matured style, the arts of description and characterization, and—"

"It makes me shudder to think of it," he objected. "I'm thankful beyond expression that I wasn't cursed that way. I have no desire to be the sole author and reader of my books. Good night and good luck!"

The next morning I did some damage to my long locks, set my teeth and started to work, feeling as if the patrol would drive up before the front door and the police would dismount to arrest me for breaking all the laws on the statute books. It was indescribably painful at first. I was sorry for the tortures I inflicted on my writhing pen; but the evil had to be committed, there was no way out of it, and I murdered my conscience gradually and stretched out a blood-red hand to crime. It's only the first step that costs, as the French say, who have taken it so often, and after the first chapter was written, the crisis was over and the rest was easy.

When my hero stood in the way and I didn't know what to do to occupy his leisure I arranged another duel and let him slaughter another rival (I thought of Harrington while I wrote), and so some twenty or more fell victims to his wicked skill. The burglars fled every time he appeared, on the edge of the dark forest or in the midst of the deserted streets; and

whenever the heroine sulked and threatened to become as deadly silent as a wax figure, I let her screech, "Gerald, I love you," or, "Gerald, I don't love," or, "Gerald, I will love you maybe some day." You can see for yourself that it wouldn't keep a Balzac out of bed after one A. M. to devise situations and to invent incidents of this description.

Nevertheless, nothing is as easy as it looks, and there were times when I had my doubts; the author of "His Brother's Keeper," "In the Depths," etc., scarcely could force himself to believe that he would escape tar and feathering for perpetrating a villainy of such colossal dimensions on a supposedly sane community. My courage began to ooze. To find out where I was and to reassure myself I read the first two or three chapters to Miss Bertha Smythe—Harrington was off on a duck shooting trip—a flirtatious young lady who boarded in our house and sold gloves in one of the downtown department stores.

I couldn't make out whether she was overcome by disgust or lost in ecstasy until she collected enough of her silvery voice to whisper in awe-stricken tones, "Why, Mr. Sykes, it's just grand. Little did I ever dream that you could write so fine. My, how you have improved! I really did try to read the copy of 'In the Depths' you gave me, but I couldn't."

"I admit, Miss Smythe," I said gravely, "that there is no comparison between 'In the Depths' and this last effort."

"I should say there isn't," she ejaculated with enthusiasm.

I was saved! Reanimated, rejuvenated, reclaimed, re—well, I ridded myself of the torture, and took myself off the rack before Harrington came back, which was before the end of the month.

When he was fatigued by counting over and over again the number of ducks his unerring rifle had brought down, he ran through the manuscript and dropped it with the highly flattering comment: "I know your earlier work showed promise, Sykes, but upon my word and honor, old man, I never thought you would develop into greatness like this."

"Neither did I, Harrington," I assured him modestly. "Only I want you to

promise me again that my name is to be kept off this abomination. I wouldn't let the world know I'm the originator of it for Rockefeller's interest in the United States."

"Don't worry," he piped up cheerfully, "the name of Sykes is enough to head the book off before it gets a start. Sykes is well enough for a breakfast food, it's superfine for a patent saw, but it's too shriekingly commonplace for literature. It's too bad you're not a girl, you might have a chance—"

"What name would you suggest?"

"Percival Marlborough," he answered on the wing. He had a genius for naming things, did Harrington. All his characters, if you wish so to designate his dressmakers' and tailors' dummies, had names that dukes and duchesses might well have envied.

"And how about the title?" I asked.

"That's so!" he exclaimed. "You haven't hit a good one yet, have you?" He lit a cigar and puffed out for awhile in meditation. "Have you said anything about organs in your book?" he asked suddenly.

"N-o-o-o."

"Anything about orange blossoms?"

"N-o-o-o."

"Very well, entitle it 'Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms.'"

I laughed at Harrington's display of wit; I wondered if he had lucid intervals like it when he was in Fanny's company. I might have known better than to credit the fellow with originality in anything, for months afterwards I learned that the *bon mot* was a mere adaptation of the process employed by the great Dumas to find a title for a disconcerted author. Still, "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms" was not bad; at least it had the merit of being no worse than the book.

According to my royalties there must be a good many more than a half million people in the United States who know what happened next. "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms," by Percival Marlborough, was a literary sensation—an illiterate thrill in the way my fondness for the truth expresses the same fact—and it no sooner dropped from the press than it arose, struck out and made a hit. It is

still striking; there is no killing a book they say, that has merit.

"The Loves of Sweet Lavender" lagged behind and crept out of sight by the time "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms"—a tale, so proclaimed the advertisement on the outer paper cover, "of wild adventure and sweet love"—had a three weeks' start. The handsome advance and prospective royalties, I admit, did bring balm to my wounded conscience; but the sales of that concentrated essence of inanity set my blood to boiling whenever I thought of it. I wished that the public had one pair of ears—you may guess what my hand itched to do to the long appendages.

What hope was there for a serious and fine bit of workmanship like "Belknap's Failure" in degenerate days like these? It might as well remain unfinished as Aladdin's tower, for all it would matter to the idiots who tumbled over one another to buy "Without Organ Or"—pshaw! I had a notion to punish them by putting the manuscript under a glass case and preserving it for my sole delectation and edification. Harrington favored the project. Shades of Balzac! But what's the use of railing against fate? We must take this sad world for what it is and not for what a few sublime and neglected souls would like it to be.

Three copies of "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms" were sent to me for Christmas presents; the donors seemed to hint that here at last was an author who knew his business, one that might serve me as a guiding star. It's absurd to send an author books for presents anyway, and it is certainly preposterous to send him his own books—especially if he happens to be the accidental creator, shall I say, of rubbish like this tale of wild love and sweet adventure. Would you present a man condemned to be hanged, with a yard of rope and a miniature gallows? The human race's lack of good sense is never so apparent as during the holiday season. What hurt most of all, what cut me to the quick, was that one of the three copies came from Fanny Foster, with an inscription in the fly-leaf, "A word to the wise—to Will from Fan."

Now what in the world did she mean

by that? I hoped she intended it for a joke; I thought too much of her to accept the insinuation seriously. Perhaps Harrington had put her up to it; he was doing all in his power to lure me into writing a sequel to "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms," to be called "With Organ And Orange Blossoms," but so far his wiles and blandishments had fallen as flat as his wit; for I had "Belknap's Failure" well under way and I fortified my soul behind that true and solid literary stronghold.

Meanwhile, Fanny and I were progressing nicely, on better terms than ever before; and I felt sure, since I now could afford opera tickets, violets, and other so to speak unauthorized extravagances, Harrington was being shoved into second place, where he belonged. I yield to no man in my contempt for filthy lucre, but all the same a Fortunatus' purse does give a fellow an air of self-assurance, of importance, of all the things mere money oughtn't to give and does. You see one is more absorbed in what he's saying to a girl and less distracted by the fear that one's big toe may pop through a worn shoe and touch the conversation off with an exclamation mark! It's an agonizing sensation. I speak from conviction no less than from experience.

Fanny may have wondered where the money came from; perhaps she thought me a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde sort of a character who wrote books by day and held up the public by night. To tell the truth, I did have that duplicit, duplicate feeling at the bottom of my heart. But if the dear girl was distressed by such qualms I did all in my power to give them a quietus. I coined any number of "mysterious-givings-out" about a certain farseeing publisher who was advancing the wherewithal on the strength of the impression created on his quick mind by the first half of "Belknap's Failure." Just wait and see what the whole of it would do to him."

"He must have a terrible lot of faith in you," she declared.

"Of course," I said. "Why shouldn't he have? Look at 'His Brother's Keeper,' 'In the Depths,' etc., etc."

"They're all solid and dignified books, Will, I gladly admit, but why don't you

write a jolly, light, entertaining book, minus your ghastly problems, like 'Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms?'"

"Fanny, please don't ever mention that unmentionable, despicable book to me again. I hate it!" I protested.

"I don't see why you always fly into a huff over it. Mr. Harrington likes it immensely," she pleaded.

"Oh, Harrington!" I snorted.

Yet despite my protest she would drag "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms" out at least twice during the evenings we passed together, which were happening more and more frequently, much to Harrington's discomfort, I think. Nothing we saw, nothing we did, nothing we heard, but recalled one of the fantastic observations, or the hyperbolic descriptions, or the attempted epigrams of that confounded book. It laid hold of her the way Hamlet gripes the average college professor who never gets tired of discussing whether Shakspeare was in his right mind or the Prince of Denmark in his wrong mind during the five acts of the tragedy. We indulged in Parsifal, the last place where one would think this literary monstrosity would dare to force an appearance, but sure enough, between the acts Fanny remarked that there was something in the sacred music that brought the tears to her eyes, that recalled the death scene of the villain in "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms." I would have liked much to know what it was, but a man can't swear under his breath and ask questions at the same time.

Harrington did his best to complicate the situation, for he was ever giving me sly digs about that accursed novel in Fanny's presence; although, to do the rascal full justice, he kept his promise to the letter, in so far as I knew, and never so much as hinted that I was the author of so much evil. But he was continually thrusting in mean side-remarks like, "Sykes, old boy, why can't you write one rip-roaring success like 'Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms?' or, "Sykes, 'Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms' is even a better seller than 'His Brother's Keeper,' or, "Sykes, Disciple of Shakspeare"—but a sample will serve.

## THE RED BOOK



DRAWN BY ANGUS MAC DONALL

"I hoped she intended it as a joke."

A handsome blonde youth who reminded me of a chocolate cream, rather through a contrast of color than of substance, happened to be at Fanny's one night when I called. She introduced me as, "Mr. Sykes, the author"—one of her incurably bad habits—and the blonde boy straightway asked, "The author of what?"—a question that disclosed both his ignorance and his impudence. I wasn't prejudiced in his favor for the rest of the séance. Not that I cared at all because he hadn't heard of me and my books, but simply

because I thought him a ninny for not hiding his stupidity under a bushel—I wonder if he could get it under so small a measure. Still I could have forgiven him his breach in etiquette if he hadn't started off the evening's dialogue by going into raptures over "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms."

"We only get a book like that once in a lifetime," he remarked, turning towards me triumphantly.

"Thank Heaven!" I declared.

Fanny's brows puckered. I switched the conversation off to German metaphysics, or French aesthetics, or—at any rate I shunted it aside to a topic that put the intruder into a compulsory silence and Fanny half asleep. I really can't say that I knew what I was talking about, but it made very little difference, since I lorded it over the arena, and the blonde boy, not elishing the inconspicuous corner into which I shoved him, soon went home. I have a sneaking suspicion that he doesn't consider authors among the highest order of animals.

"You treated him brutally and he's such a nice boy. I'm ashamed of you," cried Fanny after he left.

"Oh, yes," I defended myself, "I suppose I'm to let Mr. Chocolate Cream ignore, insult, and maltreat me, and I'm not to say a word in my own behalf."

"Of course," she drawled sarcastically, "to praise a book like 'Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms' is to ignore, insult, and maltreat you."

"Fanny," I exclaimed, losing my temper for the first time, "this has gone on far enough! I'm a long-suffering mortal, but I can't stand it any longer. To show you how absurd are your innuendoes aimed at my jealousy, I am the author

of 'Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms?' Now, rest satisfied; you've torn the confession out of me!"

She eyed me in amazement; her features spread in an ironic smile that broadened her flat little nose—I'm in love with its flatness myself—then she burst into a loud laugh.

I reddened. "Don't you believe me?" I asked.

"This is really too much," she giggled.

"It is too, too much," I retorted hotly. Carmine was my color. "I tell you that I'm Percival Marlborough; I'm the poor misguided—"

"Percival Marlborough!" she shrieked. "Am I to call you Percival or Will after this?"

"Neither, unless you change your demeanor," I declared.

"But how is one to know—it's so sudden—unless—"

"Unless you have an ounce of faith in the speaker. If you don't believe I have the modicum of brains required to write a book like 'Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms,' ask Harrington. He knows all about it."

Speak of the—well, I won't say exactly the seraphim and cherubim—and he is sure to appear, at least often enough to justify the proverb; and at that crucial moment the bell rang and Harrington was announced. He was strolling by, he had seen a light in the window—in short, he had all the excuses at the end of his fingers that slip so suavely from the digits of the personage whose name will fit in the dashes above.

"Harrington," I burst out excitedly, "I call you to witness. Miss Foster and I have just had a little dispute. Am I or am I not the author of 'Without Organ or Orange Blossoms?'"

"You certainly am—not," answered that wretch without the loss of a second.

"Modicum of brains!" put in Fanny.

"What?" I bellowed. Do you mean to say—who wrote it then?"

"Percival Marlborough," he asserted, twirling his mustache and refusing to heed my bombardment of winks.

"'Percival Marlborough' is Mr. Sykes," said Fanny.

"Since when?" asked Harrington in feigned surprise.

"Tonight," she tittered.

"And who then is Percival Marlborough, I'd like to know?" His smile wavered towards a sneer.

"Mr. Sykes," bowed Fanny.

"This is getting positively frivolous," I objected, struggling for self-control. "I flatter myself that I have a keen sense of humor, but I don't consider this humor, it's, it's—"

"Mistaken identity," blinked Harrington, gravely.

"Good night to you." I turned on my heel.

"Good night, Percival," echoed Fanny, in an aggravating falsetto that was singularly becoming to that unchristian name.

"Hold on, Sykes—I mean 'Marlborough,'" called Harrington, "I'll go with you."

I think that I heard a smothered shriek of laughter when the door slammed, and I can tell you it plays havoc with a man's pride to leave a house under the auspices of that music. He needs more than human courage to return and pull the bell with the remembered sound of it beating against his ear drums and his sense of self-respect.

"Harrington," I blustered when we reached the pavement, "what in the name of common decency did you mean by lying in that savage, ridiculous, and altogether unnecessary fashion?"

"My dear fellow," he explained, twining his arm around my right shoulder blade, "didn't you, yourself, make me promise that I wouldn't tell anybody? Didn't you say that you would be distressed and humiliated—"

"But didn't I ask you to tell; didn't I give you permission?"

"Oh, bosh! How was I to know that really you meant it, that you weren't testing my sincerity?"

"By the aspect of things."

"Of what things?"

He had me there, the knave. He forced me to retreat with a growl and a hang-dog look. Did he expect me to confess, especially when he knew I was in love with Fanny and I knew he was my

rival for her hand, that a tiff over the pseudonymous and damnonymous "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms," had brought us to a pretty pass and threatened to tear us apart when we were on the point of forming a union.

"I'm sorry, old man," he sighed contritely, hugging my shoulder blade, "but you really ought to have told me."

"Didn't I tell you?"

"But I mean in advance."

"How in the name of Sophocles did I know the subject would come up?"

"A man ought to have foresight," he philosophized.

"And consideration for his friends," I added.

He pretended to look hurt and let my aching shoulder blade go. We paced along in silence.

"See here, Harrington," I suggested, after turning the varied phases of the quandary over in my mind, "I'll give you a chance to redeem yourself. You're the only man on earth who has it in his power to clear up this mystery and put me right in the eyes of the woman I—of Fanny Foster. Now supposing we cross over to Broadway, drop in at the hotel and you write her a few lines explaining—"

"I'm awfully sorry, old man, but I've been writing all day and I've got a cramped wrist."

"Fiddlesticks! The morning will do."

"Well, on second thought, Sykes, I can't do it; I won't sully my honor. I gave you my word, and my word is a sacred thing."

"But I release you, don't I? I ask you to do it, don't I?"

"You're excited now," he expostulated, "but in the morning you'll regret it. I've had experience in this released word business before in my life. The humiliation and the disgrace of confessing to be the author of—"

"Stop your chaffing. Be a good fellow and be it quick. I'll buy you a drink."

"Thanks, I swore off this morning."

"You're getting virtuous mighty suddenly, Harrington."

"You're getting generous mighty abruptly, Sykes."

I quit him; he looked disgruntled and piqued about something or other and

there's no use trying to bend a man in that mood to your humanitarian purposes. I would have given the thirteenth chapter of "Belknap's Failure," which the discriminating few say is a veritable gem, to have discovered what he had up his sleeve. Harrington is singularly inventive until he begins to write when all his ingenuity seems to run the wrong way on his penholder.

At home I sat up and smoked and thought, thought and thought and smoked until my mind was as befogged as the atmosphere of my apartment, and then, just when I felt myself sink in the pit of despair, it dawned on me that I had a letter from Harrington—he wrote it to me when I was sweating blood over the "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms"—that would give away the whole affair and my part in it to anybody who read it. My guardian angel must have been hovering near me when I filed it away in my letter-case—a man will do a sensible thing now and then despite his inborn tendency to act in the opposite direction. I enclosed Harrington's letter, with a long one of my own, to Fanny, and mailed it before I went to bed. A load was lifted from my fatigued, heavily burdened mind and I slept the sleep of the just, who, by the way, are more apt to be troubled with insomnia than—than men like Harrington.

The janitor called me to the telephone in the morning, and when I picked up the receiver, Fanny's voice purled through it, "I didn't know whether to ask for Percival Marlborough or plain Mr. Sykes. I got your letter of apology." How like a woman that was!

"Before you commit any breach of faith or break of confidence this is Marlborough himself," I answered.

"I thought it wasn't Mr. Sykes, the voice is so much pleasanter, so much more musical," she bubbled.

"Woul'n't you like to hear it at closer range? Say at half after eleven; it's eleven now."

"Yes, but don't bring that horrid Sykes along with you. He's so tiresome with his 'In the Depths,' or 'In the Dumps,' or whatever it is; and he's everlastingly blowing about his failure, I mean 'Belknap's,' and—"



DRAWN BY ANGUS MAC DONALL

ANGUS MAC DONALL

"She shook her finger archly as she scolded." See page 54

"Good bye," I rang off.

I was there a little before the slow minute hand got around to the time appointed for our tryst, feeling a little bit shaky, nervous and rather undecided. Not that I'm a weak-willed, vacillating man, but I had never proposed to a girl before in my life—although I have directed any number of my heroes any number of times in that delicate business, with considerable neatness and dispatch, if I do say so myself—and it seemed to me that I hadn't considered it calmly enough, hadn't rehearsed my part of the dialogue carefully enough, that I was in too much of a rush.

I believe no man likes to be rejected, as witness the number of them who, after the failure of the operation, have blown a bullet through the vacuum that was

supposed to conceal their brains. I had no desire to quit this mundane sphere until "Belknap's Failure" made a howling success, *a la* "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms," with the howl left out. But how was I to propose: that was the perplexing question. Fanny's taste, which is reprehensible, so evidently ran to the "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms" style of love-making.

The method might be efficacious. It might win Fanny, but it was too utterly preposterous for me. I simply couldn't bring myself to it; I preferred the converse of the highly gilded medal, which is a lonely spot and the crash of a pistol shot in the darkness. It nearly drove me insane just to write about the hero of "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms," when he thus assaulted the heroine: how

then would I feel if I were actually to imitate him? Be the consequences what they would I intended to go about it in Belknap's admirable, dignified fashion; it is true that he had more dignity than success, that he failed lamentably with the lady of his choice; but it didn't need to follow logically that because I tossed Belknap to give the novel a tragic ending, when it came to me I had to toss myself to prevent the consummation of what I so devoutly wished. Not much! It is one thing what you do with your best characters and quite another what you would actually do yourself.

Fanny opened the door before I rang; a sly expression crossed her pretty face, she shook her little finger archly as she scolded,

"You were a silly boy to sit up so late to write such a long letter. I never guessed that the dictionary contained so many big words. I knew all about it before the book was written. Mr. Harrington thought enough of me, even if you didn't, to take me into the secret. Oh, you needn't get angry at him; I had to do a heap of teasing. He said he was sure your talk about ideals and the rest of it was affectation. He guessed you were as human as other mortals, and he declared you would fall from grace if the temptation was—"

Her lips were nearer to mine than they had any right to be unless their fair owner expected me to—to do what I did, which was a compromise between the "Belknap's Failure" and the "Without Organ Or Orange Blossoms" method of courtship, which proved eminently successful.

"Percival wouldn't have done that!" she blushed.

"No, it takes sense and courage," I rejoined, and before she could rejoin to the rejoinder I kissed her again—maybe you guessed that is what happened once before—which was less of a compromise with and more of an emulation of method number one. They say a woman always has the last word, but I discovered that morning it isn't necessarily so, for there's

a way, known to Cupid and his disciples (I'm one of them now) that will take the last word out of her mouth every time.

I traveled the rounds of the clubs and the restaurants—I knew better than to waste precious time in the art galleries and the libraries—in search for Harrington, and I found him at last in the dining room of the most luxurious of our hotels, a bottle at one of his elbows and a steak at the other.

"I thought you had sworn off?" I queried, leering at the liquor.

"Oh, that was last night," he grimaced.

"I admire your steadfastness."

"It wasn't bad for me. Join me, old man?"

"I haven't time. I've been hunting for you all over creation. I'm engaged!"

"You don't say!" He tipped his glass and his face was towards the ceiling. "To whom?"

I stared at him, lost in admiration at his sublime cheek and his magnificent impassivity.

"I've forgotten," I said, presenting him with a Roland for his Oliver.

"It's just like you," he returned. "However, it doesn't make any particular difference, outside of novels, to whom a man's engaged as long as he's betrothed and happy."

"Oh, I'm happy, Harrington!"

"I suppose. My condolence! Here's to you!"

I sat down beside the tantalizing wretch and whispered melodramatically, "Fanny—Fanny Foster."

"I knew she would get you in the end—if she persisted," he vociferated loud enough for all New York to hear. Then he jumped up, grasped me by the hand, slapped me on the back, and became so enthusiastic and effusive in his congratulations that I had some slight grounds for doubting his sincerity.

"She's just exactly the girl for you," he ended. "But that's not saying at all, that I would make the right husband for her. It's the profound, deep, intellectual type that fascinates me, Sykes."

# Good of the Service

BY HARRY IRVING GREENE

The sea spread before him like an endless sheet of new tin. Presently it heaved a bit as if the sheet had been given a shake, and a long, silent billow glided swiftly shoreward with the sun's rays glancing from it like the white flashes of the heliograph. And a little later the swell burst upon the beach with a metallic crackle and the broad sheet spread away unwrinkled once more, unwrinkled until a plummet of a pelican crashed from the blue above into the green below and shovelled up a mullet with a quick scoop of his pouch. Farther out a silver-plated barracouta leaped ten feet into the air and then fell upon the sea with a spank of his tail that a pair of good ears could hear for half a mile. From the mushroomed top of the wharf spile the boy sat staring into the depths below. The depths were like clear green glass and he could see down into them a long ways.

Back of him, rising like a mirage out of the desert of water, standing ankle deep in the coral dust of the flat key, was the flat city. The sun hung directly over it. The shade had shriveled to thin, dark fringes around the buildings and drawn itself into concise circles about the tree trunks. Above the white streets the atmosphere crinkled into wavy hair lines like the heat above a cook stove, and when a faint puff of air wandered along it felt like the hot pant of an exhausted creature. Helplessly the isle parboiled in the great kettle of the gulf and wearily the boy turned his eyes to the line of keys that ran away and away to the east and north. The keys made up the disjointed, forty league long tail of the Floridian peninsula and he sat upon almost the last joint.

"Don't believe I can stand it much longer," he whimpered. "Not much longer, I guess." Oh, how unutterably weary and sick of it all he was! He had never been intended for a soldier; he even winced at the roar of his own gun; yet there he sat a high private in the American militia, a body which as a

general proposition fears nothing this side of God. But, of course, at the time he became a member of it his country was at peace, and in addition to that Myrtle had thought he would look nice in a uniform. So join it he did, and when the call had come he stiffened his spine and marched away through the deep cañons of the city, with flowers falling upon him from the Alpine heights of the huge buildings, and for the moment had thought war a pretty game after all. But when they reached the station and Myrtle came out of the crowd and hung herself upon him with the cry, "Don't go, Jimmie, don't leave your girl all alone," oh, how heartsick and miserable and wretched he had been then! And how his heart had ached through the days that followed as he watched the interminable backward leap to the telegraph poles across fields that always seemed misty even though the sky was cloudless! And how hungry he had been to hear from her! No letter had come, but another mail steamer was now due and steadfastly he fixed his eyes on the distance.

Far off on the northern horizon behind which Tampa hid, a small black spot slowly lifted itself over the rim of the gulf and the boy cried aloud as if hurt. No sponger this time, but the hurrying mail steamer smirching the sky with smoke and eating her way voraciously through the sea. From the town behind the watcher came a shrill, quavering yell and a tremor ran through the oak sinews of the wharf as a rush of feet and hoofs fell upon it. A flush of heat and a sudden giddiness came over the boy, and worming his way through the press to the shore he threw himself face downward in the mottled shade, his breast heaving and his lips moving silently.

An hour later he got his letter and read it beneath a banyan tree, leaning against one of the down-reaching arms whose fingers had buried themselves in the thin soil about the giant's toes. His face was drawn and his eyes were full of the mute

longing of a starving, dumb animal. For across continent and ocean had come that passionate call of "Come home to me, come home to your girl," and the yearning cry of one's absent first love makes the heart sick beyond all telling.

Potter kept shuffling across the sands, shifted his small eyes from the sick face to the crumpled letter in the tense hand and understood.

Potter was a liar, a criminal, and a beast, and when army officers find that much out about a man they generally treat him accordingly. Furthermore, that affair of his of the night before would most certainly get out, and he well knew there would be something worse than the guard house at the other end of it. Therefore, he, too, longed for a land where things were not getting so hot, and his mind was fully made up that he would depart for it that very night. And so, although he had plenty of troubles of his own, Potter's first impulse at the sight of his fellow sufferer was the impulse of an ape, a desire to mock him, and yielding to it he began to mouth grotesquely. Then another thought suddenly entered his brain and he smoothed his features and drew nearer the tree. For after all two persons are better than one in a boat where there is often work for several hands, and when one of the persons is much stronger than the other, so much the better it can be made for the one. Then, too, a cat's paw is not a bad tool when hot chestnuts are to be raked, and best of all this callow one had probably saved his pay—which Potter had not. So he lengthened his face and spat viciously upon the earth as if he hated all things created.

"To blazes with the army," he said.

The boy turned upon the newcomer and looked at him with tired troubled eyes. "I wouldn't say that," he replied slowly. "No, I wouldn't say that. The army is necessary, and is all right enough for those who like it, I suppose." The man's ears were small and set as closely against his head as if they had been screwed there, but they were plenty large enough to catch the faint reproof of the tone, and he nodded in quick assent.

"Yes, for those who like it. But it is

tough for men like us, men with wives or—" He drew the rough back of his hand across his shifting eyes—"or a sweetheart," he added with a husk around his voice. The boy winced as if the word had been a dagger thrust.

"Have you one, too?" he asked, almost reverently, longing to open his bosom to some kindred soul drawing nearer to this man who doubtless suffered as he himself did. Potter turned his face away, sneered and stood flicking his pig eyes across the sea, but the boy thought they were fastened upon a distant vision of her

"If I could only see her—even for a few days," muttered the man as if talking to himself. Then his forefinger arose until it pointed at a sponging cat boat that lay beached close at hand. "And I could—with the help of that boat." The eyes of the younger man arose in sudden distrust.

"You wouldn't desert," he exclaimed earnestly.

"No, of course not. It would only be a visit home without formal permission; not nearly as bad as sneaking across the line and getting drunk, as half of the best army men do. Then, after I had seen her I would enlist again and serve out my time like a man. And what difference would it make when the army has got more men than it needs, and we are doing nothing but staying penned up here like a drove of dog-herded swine? And maybe when I re-enlisted they would send me where I would be of some real use." Potter dropped his voice to half its natural volume and whispered into the boy's ear. "And it might be the saving of her life. Her heart is breaking, and of course you know women. They can't stand such things forever. You couldn't yourself, and you're a man."

"Oh!" gasped the boy, turning gray.

"And which, I ask you, has the better right to us: this government with its thousands clamoring for our places at the front, or those weak women with no one to look after them in God's own land?" He waved his hand in a broad northerly sweep and thieved a quick glance at the twitching face of his companion. "I leave to-night at ten o'clock in that cat boat. Be there if you will.

If not, I rely upon your honor as a comrade to say nothing of what I have just told you in sacred confidence. It's a safe, easy cruise in the shelter of the keys to the mainland and the rest is but a railroad trip. Think it over and take your choice: heaven or this inferno."

The shells crunched under his feet and he was gone. The boy sat down and buried his face in his hands.

How cruelly thoughtless he had been to leave her alone in that great, grinding city. She would never have left him, he knew that; yet at the first miserable excuse he had broken from her ruthlessly and left her to face the world unprotected. Perhaps even now she was ill; she must have been when she wrote the letter that he still clutched. It was so pitiful, so scrawly. And it might be months before he would even know. Oh, for just one day in which to comfort her, explain, beg her forgiveness, and tell her how happy they would be when the war was over! And it wouldn't be desertion either; just a little visit as Potter had said. Then, when he had poured forth his love and comfort and she fully understood it all, then he would come back and take his punishment cheerfully. She was suffering so keenly, and women couldn't stand those things forever; he couldn't himself and he was a man. Slowly he arose and wandered back to the barracks, his brain on fire, but with a firm determination in his heart.

Under cover of darkness Potter laid his gun and a bag of provisions in the boat. "Where's your rifle?" he whispered to the boy who sat in the stern.

"My rifle?" returned the other with a start. "I didn't bring it. Why should I bring my rifle?"

Potter made no reply but stood scowling through the night. That had been a very ugly affair of the evening before and he did not intend to be taken alive. Sullenly he drew in the sheet and the craft stuck her nose into the north breeze. Another minute and they had passed through the low surf and were out upon the dark waters where no sound came to their ears but the low snore of the sleeping sea.

Ripley, officer of the day, reported to the colonel commanding.

"Two men deserted soon after taps, sir." The commandant looked up and the bristles of his mustache seemed to turn to wire. The honor of the garrison was in his keeping and there would not be many desertions from his fold if grousing examples had any moral effect. "Who were they?" he demanded ominously.

"Private Potter, of Company E, whom we suspected of that dirty job the other night. We were just about to arrest him. He took a boy from another company with him."

"How did they get off the Island?"

"There is a sponger missing, sir."

The elder man got on his feet and towered grim and threatening over his inferior. "Send Lieutenant Wright and half a dozen men after them in a launch. He ought to pick them up among the keys before night. Get them alive if possible, but"—the big jaw pressed itself out and the voice was as harsh as the rasp of a saw—"get them." Ripley saluted, said he would, and went away like a man who is interested in his mission, for even hunting one's runaway comrades is better than no hunting at all, and game was scarce on the sun-blistered keys of the gulf.

The afternoon wore thin and the falling murmur of the ocean tapered into silence. When the tropics rage their voices are masterful, but when they sleep it is with the hush of death. The wind went out with a puff and left the waters like a sea of oil across which the launch scurried like a green waterbug, as she stuck her sharp nose among the countless vertebrae of the continent's disjointed tail. At five o'clock Lieutenant Wright gave a sharp pull upon one of the tiller lines. "There she is, men," he said quietly.

Half a mile to the eastward a cat boat lay beached upon one of the larger keys. Her sail had been lowered, but the brown hull stood out distinctly against the background. Straight towards it the lieutenant aimed his craft, and there was a rattle of gun magazines as the crew shoved their cartridges home. Then something struck the bow of the launch with a thud and the next instant the bellow of

a Krag rose across the sea. "Steady, there!" cried Wright as one of the men ducked. "He couldn't hit a—" A squirt of water leaped from the sea into the officer's face and a second report followed hot-foot on the bullet's trail.

"They are in that low clump at the north end. Give them hell and repeat," he said as he spat the brine from his mouth. Ahead of the launch another bullet snapped a mouthful from a swell, then leaped, and Wilson gurgled and sat down with a hole drilled through his throat. From out the low island growth a form darted, grabbed something from the beached boat, then sprang back to shelter with the quickness of a cat. It had been the work of an instant and Kelley's quickly aimed bullet bit a splinter out of the distant boat a fraction of a second too late. Swiftly the launch shot on, quivering, throbbing, tearing a white-lined trough through the smooth sea, her quick-firing rifles rattling with the vicious rapidity of a machine gun. Three more harmless bullets plunged into the sea and then the fire from the island suddenly ceased. But the blood of the pursuers was now coursing fiercely and their steel hail still searched it like a flight of hornets. Full tilt on the beach Wright drove his craft, her nose rooting deep into the gravel as she sent it flying in rattling showers. Then up the bank half a dozen forms leaped with a yell, the butts of their rifles held under their armpits—then stopped.

For, lying upon the ground tightly bound and with a great lump over his eye was Potter, the badly wanted. There was a stupid look upon his face as if he was still dazed from a blow, and Wright bent over him in some astonishment. His rifle and a heavy billet of wood lay close at hand, but the boy was nowhere to be seen.

Wright straightened up and rubbed his chin reflectively. "I understand," he said a moment later. "That was the kid that ran down to the boat and grabbed something. He got the painter and this fish-stunner out of it and then scuttled back here. He didn't like this party's gun play at us, so he clapped him over the head with the stunner and trussed him

up so he couldn't shoot any more of us. Good boy." Wright cast his eyes about. "Search the island," he said tersely.

It was only a minute's work to find him. He was lying in a heap, his eyes closed and his face the color of wet ashes. There was blood on the ground beside him and a soiled letter was crushed in his hand.

Two weeks later, Potter shackled and under guard, was driven stick-pig into the presence of the court martial at the points of bayonets. His jaw hung after the fashion of a loose hinge and his face looked like that of a man who gazes at short range into the eyes of death. The commandant turned from him in disgust.

"James Merton, attention!" said he sternly.

Slowly the boy got upon his feet. His face was considerably thinner and the bandages around his right shoulder showed plainly beneath his shirt. The circles around his eyes were as deep and black as if they had been made by a fist, and his gaze rested helplessly on the floor. From the table before him the commandant picked up a crumpled letter and glanced at its opening line. Then carefully he adjusted his glasses and began to read. The silence of the room was absolute. Not a man there but had read those broken sentences, the tear stained paragraphs, the voiceless, passionate, final cry of, "Come home to me. Come home to your girl." He finished it and laid it upon the table, smoothing it with his big hand much as if he had been smoothing the head of a child. "Cursed rot," he said gruffly. "Absolute nonsense. Surgeon McMurdo, is this man in such physical condition that he can be shot without endangering his health?"

McMurdo arose. He had made a copy of the letter some days before to send to his wife, and now he adjusted a stethoscope to the boy's breast and began to listen, gravely shaking his head from time to time as he looked into the far away. Finally he let the instrument fall to the length of its tube. "I am afraid not, sir. He seems to be suffering from some acute affection of the heart and I fear a gun shot wound would prove fatal."

Then he went back to his seat and the gray heads of the judging officers drew into a close circle. For the main part they were heads that had bent low over more than one cradle and now they nodded in unison as their senior whispered. Then their backbones once more stiffened like steel ramrods as the commandant's harsh voice broke the stillness.

"James Merton, attention! The sentence of this court martial is that you be transported back to whence you came, there to remain in the custody of the writer of the letter which I have before me until the government concludes that it can no longer worry along without you. And from this sentence there is no appeal. Sentries, confine him in the hospital until

the first ship leaves for God's country. I will retain this letter as an official, justifying document."

The boy blotted the sweat from his forehead with his sleeve and stared about blankly.

"Forward, march!" cried the guard loudly. Then he whispered in the prisoner's ear.

"Trate her tiderly and name the first bye for the ould colonel, ye deserter. Hep lively there, young divil, before I jab ye."

The commandant folded the girl's letter and thrust it into the wallet where he carried most of his treasures. "For the good of the service," he grunted with a quick side glance at his official brethren.

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## A Manufactured Memorial Day

BY MARY DICKERSON DONAHEY

When Mrs. Parkinson went to California she did it under protest. Not a half-hearted feeble sort of protest either, but a very energetic, outspoken one.

For Mrs. Parkinson, the land of orange flowers and rose hedges had no charms whatever. According to her ideas, there was no place on earth so comfortable and all-satisfying as was Buffalo, N. Y. She would have told you that the Buffalo butchers know how to cut the best sirloin steaks; that the Buffalo grocers sold the best brand of compressed yeast; and that the Buffalo masculine public at large blew less tobacco smoke into the street cars than did the masculine public of any other town.

All these things counted with Mrs. Parkinson. But unluckily her income was reduced till she had nothing to depend upon but a son. And that son happened to consider California in as favorable a light as Mrs. Parkinson viewed Buffalo, N. Y.

Likewise he was married and could not afford to support two establishments. So Mrs. Parkinson packed her trunks, gave away a few of her possessions, bade adieu to the butchers, the grocers, and

the other members of that model masculine public, and with her calla lily in her arms, stepped into a westward-bound train.

The calla lily was not a very large one, but Mrs. Parkinson had reared it from its early infancy, and loved it devotedly.

When Emily Harper, who had been in California twice, tried to tell her that it would be almost funny out there, where they had hedges of callas that were measured by feet instead of by inches, Mrs. Parkinson only tilted her nose a little higher than it went by nature, and set her lips in what her family had always termed the "danger line."

So Emily kept still, and the calla lily started on its journey.

With its owner, it arrived in early March and Mrs. Parkinson's pride and loyalty were sorely tried as she viewed the floral beauties around her. She did, for one moment, poise the pot on the tips of her fingers, preparatory to casting the poor little plant into outer darkness; then she snorted majestically and drew it back.

"At any rate," she exclaimed, "ye've got more smell to ye than all their flowers put together. And I guess, if you're

good enough to be toted from Buffalo, N. Y., you're good enough to live in California."

It took Mrs. Parkinson some time to accustom herself to the ways of her new home. She immediately heaped derision upon the butchers, the grocers, and the men who rode on the back platforms of the cars; but when she went out to the little village where her son lived, things were worse.

"It's the most immoral country I ever dreamed of," she wrote home. "You can't get away from divorced folks and Chinese, and I don't see why the Lord lets either of them live."

But her greatest trial was yet to come. She did not realize the entire horror of the country till the middle of May. Then, as she stood at the window, watering her little calla lily in a defiant sort of way, she gave her first grudging tribute to the wilderness of flowers about her.

"They's one good thing," she said almost gently, "they'll make a lovely showin' on the graves on Decoration Day."

Her son's wife, who was a Californian born, looked up with a puzzled little glance. Then she smiled.

"Oh, Decoration Day!" she said, "why we don't observe it here."

Mrs. Parkinson dropped her pitcher, and her face took on a look of almost pitiful horror and surprise.

"What!" she cried. "Not observe Decoration Day? Don't you anywhere in California?"

"Oh yes, in lots of places they do," said her daughter-in-law carelessly, "but not right here. You see it would be foolish. There isn't an old soldier buried within miles of our cemetery, and most of the people weren't born in America anyway, and wouldn't care a rap about such a holiday. We never decorate any graves."

Mrs. Parkinson senior was struck dumb for a moment with the horror of the situation. Decoration Day had been to her patriotic soul even more than Christmas. Her father, her brother, and the lover of her school days, had fallen in the Civil War.

She herself had worked at all the things that women could do to help in that time of need.

In after days she had walked in the parades, she had filled baskets, she had drilled children, she had sung songs till her lungs ached, and watched torn battle flags, and listened to Memorial Day addresses till she had cried. She had gone into it all with her heart and soul, and now it seemed to her that the Lord was sending a very severe punishment on her which she did not deserve. What could she have done to merit being sent to a place where they did not believe in Decoration Day?

Then she straightened herself, a flush crept over her wrinkled cheeks, and a dignity into her manner.

"Lorella," she said simply, "maybe there has never been a Decoration Day here before, but there will be this year." And she went out into the yard to think it over.

"I'm worried about ma," her daughter-in-law said to her husband that nig t. "She seemed awfully cut up about Decoration Day, and then she seemed queer. Don't let her go and do anything silly." But Tom Parkinson knew his mother well.

"If she wants to do anything, she'll do it, Lorella," he said. "Nothing could stop her from getting her own way, and as a general rule, it ain't a bad way. Ma's all right." And he dropped comfortably to sleep.

But his wife watched, and the next morning tried her best to interest her mother-in-law in the garden, the baby, a new brood of downy chickens—anything and everything except that which she knew was first in the old woman's mind.

It was all to no purpose. After the morning's work, of which Mrs. Parkinson always did even more than her share, was done, she went in, dressed in her best, and came out with a parasol over her head, and kid gloves on her hands.

"Don't wait dinner for me, Lorella," she said as she went down the walk. "I'm going to be busy, and I may be late," and off she hurried, her square, dumpy little figure in its stiff, best clothes looking oddly out of place in that luxurious southern landscape.

She wended her way first to the mayor



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"Delivered a lecture, not on temperance but on patriotism." See page 62

of the village. He occupied a shanty, which he called a law office, right beside the chief grocery store. The chief grocery store, however, happened to have a bar behind, and so added to itself the glory of being the chief club house, too,

and Mrs. Parkinson, as she saw the mayor's coat tails slanting towards the hospitable bar, shrugged her shoulders and changed her course to the home of the Methodist minister.

From there she went to the chief



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"Peterson demanded where they were going to get soldiers."

shepherd of the Baptists and then, taking her rank Puritanism by the throat and trying her best to strangle its outcries against the customs of a life time, she went sturdily up the steps that lead to the simple home of Father O'Neil, who had much the largest, if not the wealthiest, flock in town.

Her interviews were all satisfactory. That fact was plainly evident as she came from Father O'Neil's, that gentleman gallantly bowing her from his door.

Mrs. Parkinson was still an interesting sort of woman, and besides, sheer earnestness and enthusiasm do much to further any cause.

As she entered the office of the mayor she decided that though grocery store bars were not strictly after the fashion of Buffalo, N. Y., they were at times desirable. For the mayor was in a distinctly happy frame of mind—a generous,

whole-souled, pliable state of mind—which, she had heard, was not his under strictly natural conditions.

She went straight to her point. She enforced her arguments by quotations from the local clergy. There was an amount of real eloquence, of earnestness and resolution in the little square-built old woman that astonished people who came in contact with her for the first time, and generally swept them away from their own ideas before they were aware of it.

Such was the effect on the mayor. An hour before, by nature cynical, skeptical, and hard-headed, he might have resisted her. Under the influence of the joyous warmth he had acquired next door, he almost wept as he contemplated the picture of his native village going down in history as the unprogressive, unpatriotic, and wholly heartless town where no Decoration exercises had ever been held.

Dim memories of days back east, when he had visited his grandmother and had himself marched in childish processions such as Mrs. Parkinson described, floated before his mind's eye. At last he arose. "Madam," he said, with dignity, "you have gained the support of the church. You have gained the support of the administration. Populace don't count. You come tell the boys what you've been tellin' me." And to the astonishment of the whole village, where the news was ripe by evening, Mrs. Parkinson went into the grocery store saloon, leaning upon the stalwart if unsteady arm of the mayor, and there delivered a lecture, not on temperance, as she had once threatened, but on patriotism.

And it took! She had inoculated the whole town with patriotic fever.

The maiden ladies of the place, Miss Aurora Leigh Scram, and her younger sister Sally, remembered that their mother's cousin's husband had been killed at Bull Run, and got out their black gowns and tied crape on the door knob instanter. There was a run on the two hundred volume village library for stories about the Civil War, and particularly of Decoration Day, and the school teachers were told to teach their children, most of whom were of recent foreign extraction, all their heads would hold of the glories

of that time, the sorrow and the reverence of it, and what was expected of them in the way of marching and of songs and of flower strewing and of tears.

Somehow the reverence and the tears did not take as well as they should. Every one persisted in looking upon it as a distinctly gala occasion. But Mrs. Parkinson cared not a jot, so long as her ideas of the correct celebration of the day were carried out.

She was radiantly happy, and her son, nodding at Lorella, gave forth exasperating, "I told you so's" whenever the subject was broached.

There were necessarily a few croakers. The town had got along very well during its ten years of existence without any Decoration Day. Why go to this needless excitement and expense?

Peter Peterson demanded grimly where they were going to get soldiers to kill and bury to make it all appropriate, and Louis, the half breed Indian, suggested darkly that the garrison which kept his tribe in durance, four hundred miles away, should be sacrificed and shipped there for the purpose.

But Mrs. Parkinson listened to no scoffers. No ridicule reached her, nor would it have moved her if it had.

Every morning she sniffed the fragrance of her little calla, now sprouting forth in an earnest endeavor to emulate its cousins out of doors, and told the little eastern plant her plans, and joys, and victories. And the big, curled white flowers seemed to understand and to rejoice with her.

"As why shouldn't they," she demanded of herself. "The plant's from Buffalo, N. Y., after all and that—" There was no need to finish the sentence. Mrs. Parkinson's highest compliment for beauty, common sense, intelligence, and good manners had been given.

In the preparations, Mrs.

Parkinson was everywhere. She taught the school children their songs, singing herself in a sweet, though somewhat cracked little voice, and beating time till her arms ached.

She arranged for flowers, made crosses and wreaths, packed baskets, tied bouquets.

She decided who should speak, even gaining a promise from the mayor, who when not under the spell of the grocery store bar, was apt to be cynical, gloomy, and sarcastic about the whole proceeding.

People grew to know and to love the queer, square-built, aggressive little old woman, who was like a knobby winter apple, sweet clear through.



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"Told the little plant her plans and victories."

She was the central figure of it all, and worked with a will.

She did not even realize she was tired till Decoration Day itself dawned—a clear balmy Decoration Day, such as California alone could have furnished.

But she didn't care, for her work was well done, and she was happy. There would be plenty of time to rest in afterward.

She was a little sad when she went over and cut the flowers from her calla lily. She had saved them till the last, for it seemed like parting from a friend. But nothing was too sacred to be given to this day, and she laid the two sweet scented cups in the heart of her handsomest cross.

It was a strange sight—the procession which swept through that raw little western town that morning.

The band, composed of four brass pieces and a drum, all playing out of tune and time, came first. Then white robed little girls, and preternaturally clean little boys, some happy, some shame-faced, and all laden with flowers; then the village notables.

Mrs. Parkinson marched with them, her head held high, her conscience soothed with thoughts of duty done, but her heart aching for the eastern Decoration Day: for the tattered flags, every rag of which she loved and honored; for the uneven lines of halting blue; for the actual presence of her heroes.

The cemetery was a bare little place. The graves were few. In lieu of soldiers, all were to be honored, and as the line went round, flowers were flung by prodigal little hands, till every mound was covered deep from sight.

Then back they went, to the rude stand outside the office of the mayor, where speeches were to be made.

Mrs. Parkinson listened to the speeches and the songs, and somehow the spirit seemed to go from her, and she grew so tired.

She felt that it was nothing but fun to them—a novel entertainment. To her it was reverence, patriotism, religion.

Then suddenly she heard her own name called. They were asking for a speech—asking it laughingly, though

kindly, for not one of them meant to hurt her.

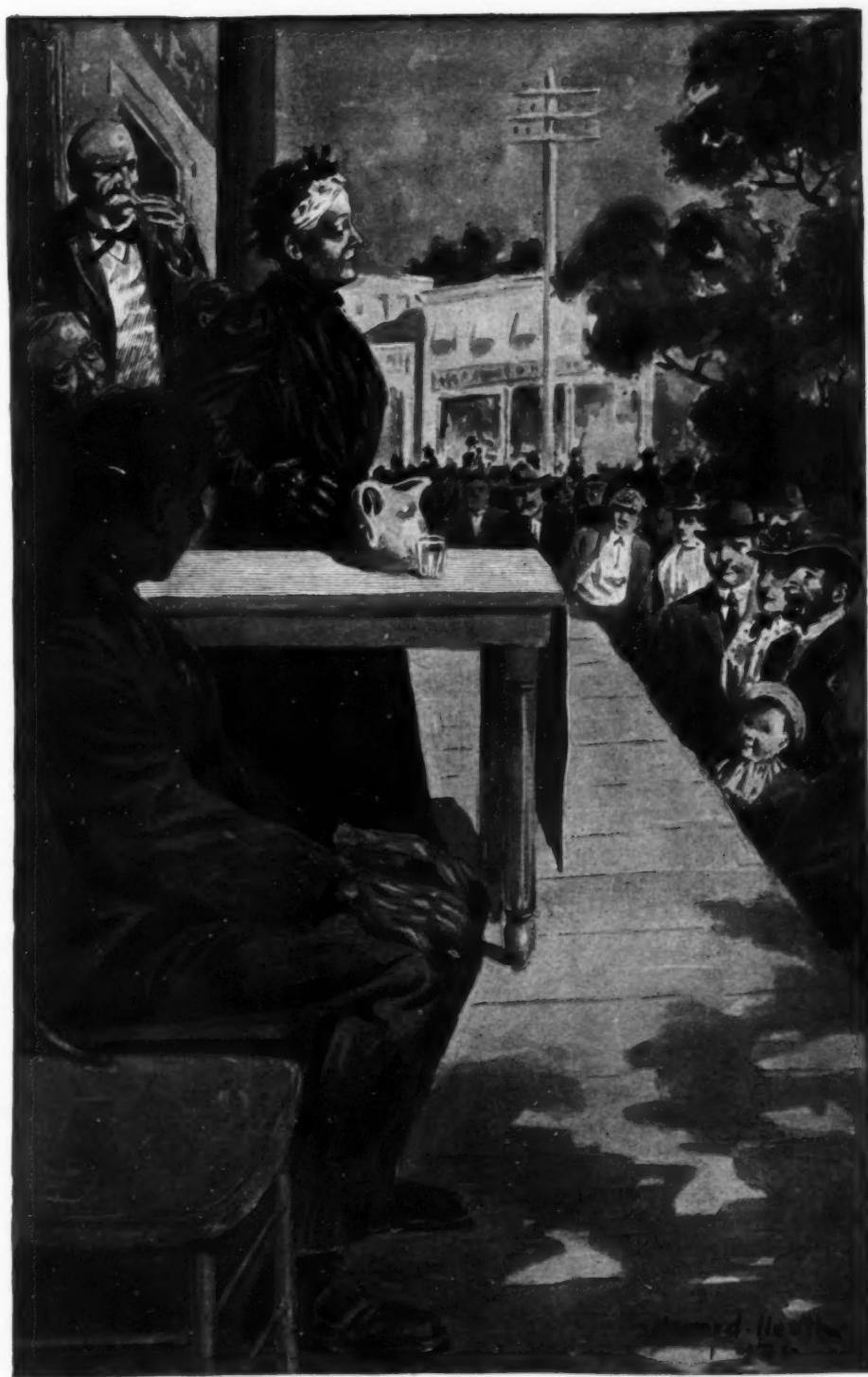
Yet somehow it did. And then her fighting spirit came back to her. Up went the loyal head, the brave little square-set figure in its black silk stepped to the platform, and somehow the laughter died as they looked at her.

She was very white, with two brilliant spots on her withered cheeks, and no one saw anything funny, even when she put her arms akimbo, hands outspread on both hips, as she began her speech.

"I jest want t' thank you," she said clearly. "You've done well, and I'm pleased. I guess I've done my duty, fer it don't seem right fer any American town, no matter how new or how many furriners it's got, fergettin' Decoration Day. But somehow I didn't hit it right. It's just been fun fer you, an' I won't ask it next year, though I'll be tickled if you want to. I understand better 'n I did. It does make a difference, not havin' a grave, nor a G. A. R. post, nor nothin'. I didn't realize. You're away from it all. You can't see. You haven't lived it all your life, nor like folks back east, heard it from those who hév. You men haven't felt the minnit when you knew you'd got to go, an' your Bible teachin' got weak when you wondered just how the Lord was a-goin' ter provide fer the ones you was leaving home. You haven't had to give up things fer your country, an' march fer her, an' starve fer her. The fightin' an' the dyin' is generally easier than the times between."

"You women haven't had to dread the minute when your men would hév to go. You haven't tried to smile all day, when you'd laid awake to cry an' pray all night. You haven't watched fer letters till your eyes ached, an' bin scared to look at a paper. You haven't tried to cheer up other women, when their letters never came, or do fer them when the papers had their names in the long black lists. You never had t' fight the thought that some day it'd be your turn, an' bear the suspense that was harder than the bad news when it come at last."

"You—you just don't know. An' I can't tell you. They's some things you've got t' live, t' understand. I've done my



DRAWN BY HOWARD HEATH

"Somehow the laughter died as they looked at her."

best, an' failed. Maybe, if I had a battle flag, all torn an' bloody an' old, th' kind o' flag that makes my throat ache when I see it, it 'd teach you something. I don't know, though. Maybe you'd laugh. But some day the Lord 'll send a man who can talk right, and explain what it all means, an' make you understand, like I can't do. I can only feel, and somehow feelin's don't count, when we can't describe 'em. I'm sorry, fer I meant to do so well. But I'm tired, an'—an'—"

Somehow the brave voice broke. The old familiar ache was rising in her throat, as there came to her the memory of the days she had tried so hard to describe. The sturdy figure wavered, the strong arms fell, and the bright color faded from her cheeks as with a tired little gesture of resignation she turned to her chair.

The crowd was very quiet now. There was no laughter, but an uneasy stirring of the people as they watched the little

figure, pitiful in its utter weariness and its disappointment.

Then suddenly Peter Peterson, the scoffer, sprang upon the platform and faced the men and women of his adopted town.

"By gosh!" he cried, an unwonted tremor in his voice, "we don't need no better speaker 'n th' one we've had, seems t' me. I ben satisfied. I seen it all. 'N I wont say no more 'gainst Decoration Day. I ben American citizen twenty year, but never good American till today. We need no bloody flags. We need no corpse. We got Mis' Parkinson. Three cheers fer Decoration Day forever, an twice a year if she says!" and Peter Peterson, the one enemy Mrs. Parkinson had feared, led the cheer that rang out from every throat in town, while Mrs. Parkinson, wet-eyed, but smiling once again, gazed happily upon the smiling friendly faces, and for the first time owned that there might be a place as habitable as was Buffalo, N. Y.

## Under the Sign of Gemini

BY JAMES BARR

It is a dangerous thing when two brothers grow up so much alike in face and figure that only intimate friends can distinguish instantly between the two. The possibilities of many situations are multiplied when by like disposition each is ever on the alert to make use of his likeness for the purpose of confronting his brother with some sudden and startling complication.

Courtenay and Jean Rapier were brothers of this kind. They took a savage delight in springing mines under one another's feet. In appearance they were as alike as two Chinamen.

The chance of a lifetime befell Jean, the younger brother, as he strolled along the Strand with his friend Lord Levesque. As always, Levesque was dressed to the verge of dandification. His silk hat fairly flamed in the glow of London's mid-day mid-May sun: his gloves were

emphatically new; his gold-headed stick, his pointed patent-leather shoes, his everything in the way of clothes and accessories was perfect, and his black mustache was curled definite as a geometrical spiral. In contrast to this noble lord Jean Rapier walked in well-bred negligé. He wore tweeds, he carried his gloves in his left hand, his cane was hooked round his left forearm, and he talked, and talked to the inarticulate, immaculate creation by his side. It was when the two were opposite Somerset House that one man whom they chanced to meet mistook Jean Rapier for his brother Courtenay.

"Why, how do you do, Mr. Rapier. To think of running against you the very first half-hour in London! This is a small village: I told you so when you were in Cleveland."

That last word was fatal.

Jean Rapier came to an abrupt pause at the sound of the voice. It was that of a well-educated American, and the tones had a pleasant, unexaggerated distinction about them, the words being frankly spoken and warmly genial. Jean Rapier saw standing in front of him, with hand outstretched, a man of medium height and like Lord Levesque, dressed to the exactitude of Euclid's rules. His beard was parted definitely in the center, and brushed almost aggressively to either side, and his eye was frank and fearless. Up to the mention of "Cleveland," Jean Rapier had not the faintest notion as to the identity of the American, but now truth flashed upon him, sudden and illuminating as a calcium light. Since his return from a visit to America six months ago, Courtenay Rapier had not ceased to praise to the skies a certain Miss Montgomery of Cleveland, Ohio. Jean knew that his brother expected this young lady and her father to visit London soon. Here, there could be no doubt, stood Mr. Montgomery, the father of the girl. Such a heaven-sent chance to dig a pitfall for his brother, Jean could not be expected to miss.

Jean allowed his face to relax into no smile of welcome. He looked the American squarely in the eyes and said coldly, "Mr. Montgomery, I believe?"

The American's brow dropped.

"That is still my name," he said, a harsh ring in his voice.

"Awfully glad to meet you," said Jean, glancing with apparent fear over his shoulder to where, a dozen paces away, stood Lord Levesque, patiently waiting the end of the interview, "and awfully sorry I cannot stop to have a few minutes' chat with you, 'pon my word I am, but, fact is I'm with my friend Lord Levesque, and, of course, cannot keep his lordship waiting. Where are you putting up—the Cecil? I'll hope to find time to drop in and see you soon. You'll now excuse me, I'm sure. This is London, you know, not Cleveland."

"So it would seem," said Mr. Peter Montgomery, turning sharply on his heel and making off, scarcely able to walk, his muscles were so rigid with rage.

"Courtenay is likely soon to become

aware of an international complication between two great English-speaking nations, I fear," said Jean to himself as he made haste to rejoin his noble acquaintance. "A friend of mine," was all he said to Levesque, and the two strolled on.

## II.

Mr. Montgomery was a proud man. As he walked away his heart, a fierce furnace, boiled blood through every vein in his body and the glow of the heat shone on his usually pallid cheeks.

"Peter Montgomery, have you come to this? Have you lived fifty years of resourceful, independent life that in the end you might come to a one-horse town like London to be pooh-poohed off for a stripling lord? Have you brought your daughter across the Atlantic to throw her at the head of a conceited snob, who, after accepting all the hospitality you could lavish upon him in Cleveland, is now ashamed to meet you in the sight of his friends? Peter Montgomery, if you dare put up with this, I say you are made of basswood, whereas you always claimed to be hickory. By heavens, there should be a law passed prohibiting a white girl from marrying an Englishman."

He ran against a policeman.

"See here, officer, where can I find a Cook's tourist office?"

The policeman directed him to Ludgate Circus, whither he whirled in a hansom.

"See here," he barked to a clerk, "I want to go somewhere, quick. Where can I go? Hold on! You're an Englishman, aren't you? Well, I don't want you, I want what you call a 'foreigner.' Ah, German? You'll do. Dane, eh? Oh, all right. Anything but an Englishman. I want to go somewhere on something that is leaving these shores quick. I don't care a continental where the place is so that it is continental and away from this insular island surrounded by seas of snobbery and enveloped in fogs of prejudice. Some day a *man* will step on the edge of this island and the darned concern will flip over like a flapjack. Norway? Yes, that seems good. I want tickets for my daughter, maid and self. Here you are, and I am proud that

the first money I spend in England is laid out to get me out of England. Good day."

When he reached the Hotel Cecil he found that both his daughter and the maid were out. In impatience and irritation he awaited his daughter's return.

### III.

At the same moment precisely that Mr. Montgomery addressed Mr. Jean Rapier in the Strand a card was handed to Lucy, the maid, who in turn handed it to her mistress, Helen Montgomery. Engraved upon the card was the name "Mr. Courtenay Rapier," this followed by the letters, "M. R. S. M." which letters be it known, stand for "Member of the Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain."

Helen Montgomery framed the card between her second finger and her thumb, and holding it at arm's length on a level with her face, gazed at it long and silently. She thought it the most glorious sight she had seen since leaving Cleveland a month since. Only a few moments ago she had put on her hat to stroll into the Embankment gardens of which she caught luscious glimpses from the hotel windows. Sunshine, soft and rich, fell upon the deep green sward, laburnum trees stood draped in dripping gold, chestnuts held aloft their myriad candles to the sun, and wafting hither and yon, like souls of little children, butterflies flew their uncharted flight. Everywhere was green and gold and sunshine, and over all a tranquil quiet and rest. Helen Montgomery wished to wander among the gardens the better to realize that at length she walked in London. Too late! The card was in her hand. She hurried into the sitting room of the suite her father had engaged and gave word that the caller was to be shown in.

He entered with a stride and he brought with him an atmosphere of the great outdoors, of golf-links and river-stretches, of wind-blown seas and Highland hills. The hand he held out to her was large and heavy, and it wrapped itself round the little white hand of the American as a shell envelops a pearl.

"Here you are in London," he cried

heartily, "and you have brought your own Euclid Avenue sunshine with you. Once on a time the sun came to us from the east, but now you Americans crook your little finger and hey, presto! he trots across the Atlantic as part of your luggage."

He continued to hold her hand in his, looking down into her eyes from the height of six feet and one-half inch. Her face, full of merriment and happiness, was turned up to his.

Not every American man breaks down at forty, nor is every American girl full and tall. Here stood one, a Western sylph, slender as an iris, lithe as a branch of the birch tree. A glorious cloud of dark hair pillow'd her white forehead, her cheeks told of the Atlantic's bronzing breezes. She poised on her toes, a sister to the wren.

"You are a sudden convert to sun-worship, are you not?" she asked laughingly. "I seem to remember that in Cleveland you wished the sun to move on."

"Ah! that was the undiluted American sun; much too strong and frank for sleepy English eyes. How it smote upon those white pavements of yours! I can yet see the rays splintering on the stones like flames playing above molten metals. Eyes that can bear that sunshine can look the world in the face. But never mind the sun, tell me, where is your father?"

"Out in the wilderness of London, asking questions of savages somewhere in that direction," she held out her hand and spun round on her heel, indicating every point of the compass in her circular sweep.

"That is definite, I must own," he laughed. "Now, I believe that it is claimed that men are unnoticing creatures, but I observe that your hat is on. From that circumstance I sapiently infer that you were about to go out or, perhaps, have just come in?"

"I did intend to go for a walk," she admitted.

"How quickly the English spirit is engendered! Before you are twenty-four hours in the island you feel bound to take to your feet and walk. In your country, what is a pocket without a street-car ticket? But tell me, was there any defi-



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"Fact is, I'm with my friend Lord Levesque."

nite object in the proposed walk or was it to be an English walk, a walk for the walking of the walk."

"Just a walk," she admitted.

"Good! May I come? I am sure you will not be so cruel as to refuse me this, my first request."

They strolled down to the Embankment gardens where he pointed out to her the newly-erected monument to Sir Arthur Sullivan; they crossed into St. James' Park, skirted the front of Buckingham palace, cut through Green Park, and entering Piccadilly came to the Princess restaurant in pleasing time for lunch. This finished, Courtenay Rapier, in a hansom, whirled the delighted and delightful girl back to her hotel and, promising to call later in the afternoon to meet her father, betook himself to his club.

#### IV.

When Helen Montgomery entered the private sitting-room she found her father pacing the floor in keen impatience. At a glance the daughter recognized that something serious was afoot. She understood her father's moods: his face was as print to her. Here now she read on the parchment pages of his cheek anger, resentment, indignation, determination.

When fits of anger or distraction were upon him, Helen feared her father. She had tripped in from her walk and luncheon, her heart light as a lark's, the joy of the morning on the tip of her tongue, but at the sight of her father's face her enthusiasm collapsed like a stricken balloon. Still holding the ha'ndle of the door she looked up at her father.

"Helen, I want you to write a letter." "Yes, father."

In the Montgomery household the American "papa," had never managed to usurp the "father" of Peter Montgomery's Scottish ancestors.

"The letter you are to write will hurt you, but only for a time. That time past, you will be glad."

"Yes, father."

"Hurt or glad or neither glad nor hurt, the letter has to be written. You will question in no way, but write as you are told. I have learned mortifying news."

Helen instantly divined that the matter

must be of a social nature and that it struck at her father's great pride. She knew that he would not dream of troubling her with a business matter, let the financial stars of Cleveland rain from the commercial firmament. She thought the cable had flashed across some dire tidings of her brother at home.

Peter Montgomery began to dictate:

"Sir:—You are to consider—our friendship—at a definite end, and—you will please understand—that you are not to call here—otherwise—"

Helen Montgomery suddenly ceased to write. A few moments she gazed at her pen, then abruptly shoved her chair violently back from the table at which she sat. Her cheeks flamed with sudden emotion.

"Whom am I addressing in this letter?" she demanded.

"I told you to ask no questions." Her father placed his knuckles on the edge of the table and looked her fixedly in the eye.

"But I insist on asking one question. To whom does the 'Sir' apply?"

"Write!"

"Answer!"

Father and daughter fronted one another, eye to eye. The father was the first to waver, if waver it could be called.

"You have already guessed," he answered.

"Courtenay Rapier?"

"Courtenay Rapier. You will now finish the letter."

"I shall do nothing of the sort."

The girl snatched up the sheet of note paper and savagely crumpled it between her palms. Her eyes beat back her father's angry glances. Rebellion, red rebellion! It had been long in coming in her life, but now that it did flame forth she rebelled with all her might. Tearing the crumpled paper into tiny pieces, she flung them fluttering out of the window.

"I refuse to write," she said.

Peter Montgomery stood dumfounded. The fact that he could be rebelled against struck a feeling of great helplessness into his heart, and his first definite feeling was one of deep sorrow for himself. Dictators are always rich in self-pity. After a

time he attempted to reason, the season for reasoning having passed.

"Helen, be reasonable. This morning I learned—"

"I care nothing for what you have learned, so there!"

"Very well, Helen. I will just tell you that we leave London tomorrow morning and you are to be ready to go."

"Yes, father, I will go, but the letter will not go."

Peter Montgomery strode out of the room.

### V

Jean Rapier and his friend Lord Levesque were already comfortably seated in the club, half way through their after-lunch cigar and quite through their coffee, when Courtenay burst in upon them. The new comer was enthusiasm in epitome and soon told all his joys. Jean, for once foregoing his accustomed semi-insolent sarcasm, listened sympathetically.

"How many are across?" he asked.

"The daughter and father. The rest of the family, the son, has not crossed."

"Have you seen the father?" innocently inquired Jean.

"No, I have seen only the one."

A pause followed. Jean broke the silence.

"By the way, Courtenay, I received this *billet doux* a moment ago. As I know nothing of the matter, I apply to you, my dear big brother, to shed light upon it."

From the envelope handed to him, Courtenay Rapier drew forth a summons commanding the presence of Jean Rapier at the court of Wellingborough, a town about a hundred miles from London, to answer to the charge of furiously driving



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"Father and daughter fronted one another."

a motor car and, further, with being unable to produce his license when asked by the police. Courtenay read the document through with the greatest complacency.

"Ah, yes," he said. "I thought, perhaps, you know, you might be getting something like this sooner or later. I'll own up to being in fault in driving rather fast—you really have no defence to that part of the charge, Jean, for I was spinning along—and, yes, it was not quite the thing to give your name to the police, perhaps. As to the license part of the charge, I really was not to blame for I had not your license with me, you know, and having given the name of 'Jean' I could not

show a license made out for 'Courtenay,' now, could I?"

"Oh, spare me your apologies."

"I will. I guessed that it might be inconvenient for me to attend court next week, with my American friends just arriving, so I took whatever liberty it was of deputing the matter to you."

"How good of you! I take it I shall be fined."

"Doubtly, I fear. The police are devilish inconsiderate. But it is an interesting drive down to Wellingborough. You can take my car; in fact, I think it will be better to do so, as the police have the number of the vehicle."

"Oh, thank you kindly."

"Don't mention it. You would do as much for me if you had the chance."

The three sat in languid silence for an hour before Courtenay roused himself.

"I say," he addressed Lord Levesque, "I wish you would walk over to the Cecil with me. I want to introduce you."

"Am I not asked?" inquired Jean.

"Not this time. Later on I hope to win for you all the privileges of a brother-in-law, whatever they may be."

The two set out. Then Jean went farther than a man has any right to do, even when playing a practical joke. He dashed to the telephone and, ringing up the Cecil, asked for Mr. Montgomery. Receiving a reply from that gentleman, Jean spoke:

"Oh, by the way, Mr. Montgomery, when I met you this morning I was somewhat taken aback, seeing I was walking with Lord Levesque, a most particular nobleman, you know. I may have appeared a little cold and that sort of thing, but it was only because of the company I was in. I am sure you will understand the predicament I was in, but to show you that I have no particular objections to my lord knowing our acquaintanceship—"

"Not another word; I'll listen to not another word," came the voice of Mr. Montgomery, ringing with indignation.

"I'll bring Lord Levesque round with me—"

Jean heard the receiver slammed to its rest at the Cecil.

"That should square the motor deal," grinned Jean, as he returned to his com-

fortable chair. When he had grown older he admitted that he had exceeded gentlemanly bounds.

## VI

When the door closed behind her father Helen Montgomery faced the window and looked out on the gardens and river. Double dismay had hold upon her; dismay at her first rebellion against the will of her father, dismay at some unknown defect in her lover. Each in itself was enough to annihilate composure, the two together seemed to tear in twain the firmament above her. The granite foundations of the hotel heaved and subsided beneath her feet; Cleopatra's Needle, hitherto so rigid, quivered on its base. Color vanished from lilac and laburnum, the river was a gray valley of rolling tears.

With a sudden start she fell back from the window and for some minutes walked aimlessly round and round the room. Then she sat down on the very edge of a sofa, clasped her hands together, and with eyes set in rigid features glared straight in front of her at nothing in the world. No tears came to relieve the strain. On a sudden she reached over to one side and gathered two invisible hands from the air, folded them in her own and placed them gently in her lap. Since the days of tiny childhood she had resorted to this solace when in distress, for the hands were those of her mother, gone from earth these many days. For the first time, the presence of her mother beside her failed to comfort her.

As a player grasps his violin and by masterly though fractional turns of the pegs strains the strings to a proper playing pitch, so Helen Montgomery took firm control of herself and began to string her nerves high for drastic action. After the first turn of the pegs she passed out of the hotel and, stepping into a hansom, ordered cabby to drive to Princes Gate. As the hansom whirled along Piccadilly, dived down into Knightsbridge, and skirted Hyde Park, poor Helen Montgomery thought many brave thoughts. Cabby drew up before a house of appearance imposing only to a Londoner.

Once out of the cab the girl stood irresolute, glancing from the door of No. 27 to the cab and back again. At length she

gave the pegs another twist and boldly bidding cabby to wait, she lay hold of the door bell and jerked it with a most unfeminine tug. The alarm set up by the bell seemed to find lodgment in her own heart so that it thumped against her side like the beat of a drum. Slowly the door swung open and Helen found herself face to face with an unctuous British butler, a fellow broad and benign as an ocean at rest. In his world was no hysteria. Those great round eyes in that great round face over that great round body!

At the first sight of this pompous, placid, bred-and-born butler, the girl ejaculated an involuntary little "Oh!" and was then obliged to give the pegs a woeful wrench in order to stay the terrible collapse of nerves occasioned by the disconcerting sight.

"If Mrs. Rapier is at home give her this card, please," said Helen, presenting the dainty card to the haughty flunkey.

Marvelous to relate, the butler seemed impressed. He conducted the girl up a flight of stairs and flung open the door of a large drawing-room. In a wilderness of furniture, solid as the Empire and proportionately large, the girl from Cleveland awaited the coming of Mrs. Rapier. Her fingers were never off those pegs, but screwing ever tighter and tighter. And just as the door opened she gave one tremendous wrench, standing there on the tip-toe of ferment and trepidation.

At the very first sight of Mrs. Rapier's face poor Helen's nerve went with a rip. Managing only to cry out, "You know who I am, don't you?" she scurried across the floor and flung herself into the gray-haired lady's arms. The sobs seemed to run along her slender form from the tip of her toes to the crown of her head, like the whip of a taut rope.

"Child, child," cried Mrs. Rapier, her heart as profuse of sympathy as a magnolia of blossoms, "Child, child, whatever is the matter?" She pressed her to her bosom. "Do not carry on so. There there, there," and the tears began to trickle down her own cheeks. The old lady held the young girl in her arms for she realized that the cry must out. After a pause she quietly led Helen to a sofa and sat down by her side.

"We will sit here together and you will tell me all about your troubles. I know you have no mother, and although I have no daughter, yet I was a daughter, you know. I have been a long, long time in this world, and I know."

"And I, I don't think I am out of the cradle yet," cried Helen, digging at her eyes with her handkerchief. The collapse of her nerves and the storm of weeping left a feeling of great comfort within her, and the presence beside her of the matronly, kind-hearted Mrs. Rapier soothed her to a numb happiness.

"To be sure, you are not out of the cradle yet, and my heart goes out to a girl who can cry and laugh. There is something wanting in a girl who dares not cry."

Helen Montgomery turned up a rueful little face, the glances from her eyes sparkling against the tear-stained lashes.

"Today I should like to cry myself all away," she said.

The combination of face and words was too much for the Englishwoman. She burst into a hearty laugh, and ended by giving the girl a kiss.

"I am not going to let you fly away from me now that I have got you at last, so don't you attempt to cry yourself away. When you leave this house you will leave it singing, my child. What a beautiful girl you are! Now, dear, tell me all about it."

She brushed away the tears from Helen's cheeks.

"Is he so terribly wicked?"

The glance the girl shot at the Englishwoman was half fearful, half amused.

"He? Who, child? If he is a man or a horse the chances are that he is terribly wicked. Whom do you mean, child?"

"I mean your—your son Courtenay."

"Courtenay?"

"Father says he has heard terrible things, and—and forbids me to have anything to do with him, and—and—and oh! I wish we had never left Cleveland—"

Another storm of distress and disappointment swept over the soul of the lovely girl.

"You will make me break down, too, indeed, you will. Don't, child, don't," pleaded the elderly woman. "A father hears too much when his only daughter

## THE RED BOOK

is concerned. A father's love is apt to be a selfish thing, dear, causing him to cling like a miser to his daughter. He, too, often thinks of himself, all the while believing he is thinking only of his child. Fathers hear things; we mothers hear nothing but good of our children, for our ears are tuned to hear nothing but good. And our ears are right."

"It was wicked of me to come to you with a tale against your son," sobbed the girl.

"No, child, no. To whom else could you go? You have no mother. You were right to come to me. You were right and you were brave. What does your father say he has heard?"

"He would not tell me."

"To be sure not. I might have known

that without asking. But when did he hear?"

"It must have been this morning."

"Have your father and Courtenay been together?"

"No, for—for—" the girl blushed, "your son and I have been together all the morning; we lunched together—"

"Of course you did, child. Courtenay told me he intended calling on you and I thought you would lunch together. I wanted him to bring you here for lunch, but he was selfish. It is strange how your father has heard things about the boy. Surely his desperate reputation is not so bruited abroad as to be picked up in the streets of London. I do not understand it at all."

"Nor I," admitted the girl.

"Does your father know you are here?"

The girl shook her head.

"Well, here you stay, my child, until all is made smooth again. Trust me, when I tell you that the whole matter is some silly mistake. Courtenay is a Londoner. London is a large collection of very small villages, and, believe me, the people are rural, far more rural than you will find in Cleveland. Courtenay is a great lump of a good-natured boy. If he had not been taught to play the piano he would have taught himself to play the penny whistle and enjoyed the music. There is nothing wrong with the boy excepting that our circumstances allow him to have too easy a time of it. He is not terribly wicked, my child."

Helen Montgomery was smiling. She trusted Mrs. Rapier wholly.

"I will send the carriage to the hotel with a note asking your father to come here, and, depend on it, I will make you all as happy as sand-boys. Meanwhile, my dear, run upstairs and leave off your hat, and fuss up a bit, and make yourself all straight, and then come down to me, for I want to hold your hand while we have a long, long talk. You must make a companion of me while you are in London. I wish I had a daughter just your age, child, but there is no use wishing, and you must make the best of me. What a beautiful child you are!"

A madonna-faced maid led the girl upstairs.



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"Flung herself into the gray-haired lady's arms."

## VII

Courtenay Rapier and Lord Levesque reached the Cecil. No Mr. Peter Montgomery awaited their arrival. Instead, Courtenay was handed a note written with that legible precision of an American business man. He read:

Mr. Courtenay Rapier:

Sir—I consider it a third insult that you should call here to see me. Understand that I do not put up with one insult, let alone three, from any man. You, therefore, will cease forthwith from annoying me or take the consequences.

Courtenay Rapier read this missive three times. "If — this — does — not — beat — the — Dutch," he muttered, and shoved the note into Levesque's hands. "What do you make of it?" he demanded.

"It seems fairly explicit," said the noble lord, after running his eye over the matter. "I gather that at the moment of writing Mr. Montgomery could bring to mind acquaintances whom he would sooner meet than you."

"That's reasonably obvious, I should say," Courtenay said angrily.

"Ye-e-s, I fancy so. I would not look upon this note as too flatteringly friendly, don't you know."

"Oh, you wouldn't, wouldn't you? So that is all it conveys to your mind?"

"Do not let me appear a pessimist. He does not threaten to shoot you; that is, he doesn't in so many words."

"Thank you."

"So matters might be worse, don't you know."

"You're the sort of comrade a fellow would choose to sustain him in storming a breach," said Courtenay, bitterly.

"My dear Courtenay, you don't require to be led to the breach; you're in it."

"I'm off to the club to think this matter out. Head or tail of it, I cannot make. Are you coming?"

"My mission in life seems to be to weep with those that weep. I'll go with you."

## VIII

In Courtenay's motor which he had taken from a garage in Knightsbridge, Jean Rapier drove up to his home at Princes Gate and was much surprised to find a small gathering of vehicles before the door. His mother's carriage paced

to and fro on the gravel drive, and two hansom cabs stood cheek by jowl, the cabbies exchanging pleasantries.

"I say, cabby, what are you doing here?" Jean called to the nearest.

Cabby quickly gathered up his reins and set his horse in motion.

"Just now set down two young gents from the Sports Club, sir," he answered, butting his head backwards towards the door.

"And you?"

The second cabby slowly removed his short pipe from between his teeth.

"If you must know, I drove a young lydy 'ere from the Cecil. She told me to wait. I 'ave waited two blessed hours. She has mislaid me, I fancy."

"American lady?"

"All American," admitted the cabby.

The carriage came close to the motor, and the coachman touched his hat.

"Whom are you waiting for, coachman?"

"Just come from the 'otel Cecil, sir, bringing of a gentleman."

"American?"

"Yessir. A Mr. Montgomery, I think, sir."

"Was it Lord Levesque and my brother who drove up in that cab?"

"Yessir."

Jean dashed up to the door. He did not use his latch-key, but rang the bell to bring the butler.

"What's the gathering upstairs, John?" he asked.

The butler's broad countenance grew broader still as a grin spread over his features. He had early detected Mr. Jean's genius working in this latest complication, and for that genius he harbored the greatest admiration.

"First the young lady arrives crying, and after-wile a carriage is sent to 'is 'otel for the old gentleman, and 'e goes upstairs looking black as thunder, and Mr. Courtenay 'as just this minute gone up with Lord Levesque."

"Quite a family party, John. However, there will be one vacant chair. I'm off."

At this moment the drawing-room door opened and Mrs. Rapier appeared at the top of the stairs.

"Is that you, Jean? Come up here this instant."

"No, mother, I'm not Jean. I'm Courtenay's new chauffeur, shortly to be on the way to pay fines in various rural districts of England. If any one wishes to behold such a celebrated person as I, let him or her look out of the window. I am about to get into 'my chariot.' "

Jean bolted out of the door and took his stand by the side of the car. Five faces appeared at the two windows. Jean paid no attention to that window from which looked forth the faces of Mrs. Rapier, Mr. Montgomery, and Lord Levesque. He

faced the other, and from his pocket drew forth the summons and flourished it towards Helen Montgomery and his brother Courtenay. Then he stepped into the car and shot out into Kensington Gore.

Jean Rapier's wedding present to his to-be sister-in-law Helen took the form of a copy of Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors," bound from divine designs by Haite. Helen turned the thing of beauty over and over again, admiring perfection. Yet, when she laid it down she said with feminine emphasis:

"I'll never forgive him, *never!*"

## The Quest of the Sucker

BY CAMPBELL MACCULLOCH

Mr. James Forsyth Crandall walked down Broadway on the east side of the street deep in thought. His hands were shoved in the pockets of his frayed trousers. His coat collar was turned up as a concession to the conventions in the absence of linen, and his hat brim was turned down in front, while at the rear it raised a protesting sunburned edge to the heavens. To be perfectly frank about it, Mr. Crandall was financially embarrassed to the very furthest degree, and it was with a view to relieving that distressing condition that he was puzzling over the situation. To be vulgar as well as frank, he was flat broke, and while this was not a positive novelty, familiarity with it had never made it the more enticing.

It may be mentioned without further preamble that if a possible acquaintance had addressed Mr. Crandall by that name, he would in all probability have neglected to acknowledge the greeting, while if the possible acquaintance had used any one of a score of more or less descriptive titles, he would have achieved instant recognition. Had the passer-by, for instance, murmured in a low tone his belief that he was addressing "Larry Winter," or "Cardy Phil," or even just plain "Brace," there need have been no hesitation in de-

ciding whether the addressee recognized them. But all this is mere detail and of little value. Mr. Crandall had arrived in New York two mornings before, and had in his possession at the time of his arrival just one lone quarter. He had journeyed hither on account of the pressing inquiries set afoot by prying police in another city, and in his own characteristic language, it was decidedly "up to" Mr. Crandall, *alias* the above nomenclature, to "get busy" in quest of food, raiment, and a place to sleep, all three of which were at this interesting moment unavailable by reason of the monetary shortage just mentioned.

James Forsyth Crandall was not born to the profession of deceit, by any means, for he had received the usual education accorded young men of some social position by their doting fathers, and had even, at one time, early in his career, officiated in a minor clerical position in a bank; but that was years ago, and a trifling discrepancy in a cash account while in passage from one monetary institution to another had brought on the hiatus of Mr. Crandall in a most peremptory manner. Since that time he had lived in one way or another, but always without the necessity of actual manual labor, and with a fair amount of

success as far as clothes and food were concerned. To be very brief about the matter, and to adopt the language of the rude police aforementioned, Mr. Crandall was a "grafter," and by virtue of that calling, averse to anything that savored of laborious enterprise. The inquiring guardians of twenty cities had an affectionate regard for him, and always took particular interest in his goings and comings, and even went so far as to make little friendly calls of an unexpected nature upon him when he had forgotton to leave an address. Twelve years had elapsed since Mr. Crandall committed the *faux pas* referred to at the bank, and since that time his education had grown apace. He had looked on with round-eyed wonder when a heavy gentleman, with stubby fingers studded with diamonds, a heavy black moustache, and a rollicking taste in clothes, had, in the seclusion of a hotel room, first instructed him in the gentle art of pea rolling, and had even blushed with annoyance when he found he could deftly deceive the honest son of agriculture at the county fair, by shifting the pea from one delicate shell to another.

That was Mr. Crandall's first attempt in the profession of deceit, and he had become more than ordinarily proficient; so much so that he had set up in the pea-rolling trade for himself, and had purchased a "graft privilege" from a circus some three months later. This privilege gave him much more opportunity than the county fair had done, for he was part and parcel of the "big show," and in company with others was privileged to call for corporal assistance on the boss canvasman and his myrmidons when the sons of the soil emitted what was technically known as a "roar" concerning their abstracted wealth. Mr. Crandall did not permit his newly awakened energies to lie dormant by any means during this period, for he became exceedingly shifty with the "short cards," and in the fullness of time further added to his personal impedimenta by the purchase of "holdouts," and other tools of the card sharpening trade. He never forgot the first faro layout he saw, and his mind went at once to work

on the problem of still further increasing the chances against the player and in favor of the "bank." He never forgot the tears of chagrin when he learned that the "brace faro" box was an old established institution when he was but a babe in arms, and his discovery that the innocent appearing roulette wheel had been "fixed" long before the Mexican War, left him little or nothing to invent. With these matters of education driven into his mind judiciously, Mr. Crandall set forth on a field of wider endeavor and he soon learned the mysteries of the medicine "fake" and the bucolic "promissory note" with other kindred matters that go hand in hand with these. His tour of the Middle West, lasting some years, had left him with a fair working knowledge of things that can be "worked," and his education was complete in but one respect. He had never "worked" in New York, and was consequently but an infant. Now was come the opportunity, not by his own volition altogether, to be sure, but still it was here.

Mr. Crandall consequently turned over many ideas in his mind, as he walked along, only to dismiss them as unavailing, for they all required capital, and of that he was guiltless. Besides, his inner man was clamoring most disgracefully for something to nourish it, and once more it was "up to" him. As he walked along he kept a wary eye out for the minions of the law, purely from force of habit and in a non-committal manner, for Mr. Crandall was none of your common or garden offenders. With good and well fitting garments upon his back he looked and conducted himself as a man of education and refinement should, but these were evil days and his personal appearance permitted his moral courage to ooze out at the broken sides of his shoes. He reached Madison Square Park and spotted a vacant seat on a bench near the fountain. To that he made his way, and with his hands still in the pockets, sat him down. He sat there during twice the police tour of the square, and raised his eyes in time to encounter those of a well dressed stranger who stood regarding him from a distance of fifteen feet or so. Then he drew his feet together

## THE RED BOOK

and under him, preparatory to a rise and answered the quizzical look with one of inquiry. The stranger nodded infinitesimally and moved off across the park in the direction of Madison Square Garden. Skirting that structure to the north the well dressed one passed along Twenty-seventh street and in the fullness of time turned casually in the side door of a saloon. Within two minutes Mr. Crandall followed him and sat down at the same table. Then for the first time words were spoken. The well dressed personage, who resembled a man of solid and substantial worth, smiled slightly and observed:

"Son, you hit the rumble from Beantown, I take it."

"Your reasoning is absolutely faultless," replied Mr. Crandall. "I'm astonished at your perspicacity. As you justly observe, I travelled here by the homely freight, lacking the price of the Pullman with accessories."

"You're also up agin the cushion good and plenty," said the pleasant man.

"Ah! Ferdinand, you are undoubtedly a marvel," sighed Mr. Crandall. "You are a scintillating brain indeed. Permit me to observe, however, that the refreshment clerk hovers in the near distance," and he indicated the bartender, who wiped the table ostentatiously.

Without further conversation of any material sort Mr. Crandall absorbed two extremely large portions of lager beer and then sighed deeply and stretched his legs out again along the sandy floor. Then the acquaintance of the excellent raiment spoke again.

"What's the trouble, Larry?" he asked gravely. "Down and out and in it up to the neck? No pad money, no high stool change even, and the front decided to the fromage? In other words, all in?"

"You hit it," said Crandall. "You everlastingly hit it. I was compelled to hike out of Boston on account of a little difficulty 'Greasy' Flaherty and myself encountered. We had been persuading those solid and stable Puritans that the home mission field was sadly neglected, and I was doing the brand from the burning with a white clerical collar and a look

of meek resignation, while 'Greasy' was busy with the come-unto-me-little-children weeps, we were gathering in the wherewithal finely until a cross-eyed old female mentioned her suspicions to the chief and—I was forced to abandon my good clothes and sneak out of town in this disgusting outfit. I fear, however, 'Greasy' is detained."

"What's the lay now?" inquired the prosperous one. "Anything on at all?"

"Nothing in this fair universe," said Crandall. "I was wondering if I could by chance recognize a name in the city directory when you came along. I had thoughts of a touch. From here it looks to me as if you will be the touchee."

"Not yet a bit, Larry, my boy," reprovingly remarked the good gentleman opposite. "There's things that must be talked over, Larry. Many things. Perhaps I can use you in a little something and perhaps I can't. That's for us to find out."

"Well, shoot your wad," pleasantly observed Mr. Crandall. "Go out after the language and bring it home. Drift on with the lingual flood tide, Simpson, and let's hear all about it. I take notice you have small change. Keep it in circulation, old boy. I'm twenty-four hours from beer and such conceits."

Mr. Simpson, having performed the necessary feat of changing one dime into two foaming beakers, proceeded to elucidate.

"I need a bright young chap with some talk. Not that I'm shy on talk myself, Larry, but I don't handle your kind of talk with ease. I want someone to dig in with a few swells and make 'em think he belongs. I'm a rank outsider and I ain't in the money at all. It wants front and it wants education, and I can furnish the first and you've got the last, and there's where you come in, son."

"What's the lay?" inquired Mr. Crandall. "Wherein do I profit by this conversation?"

"You're in one-third," said Simpson. "Just one-third of the rake-off is yours. You do the proper thing by me and I'll furnish the front and call it part of the working capital. Do you fall?"

"I'm the very individual you have been searching for, Simpson," said Mr. Cran-



DRAWN BY HOWARD V. BROWN

"Then for the first time words were spoken."

dall. "I care not what it all is, save that I must not be asked to rise before eleven, nor retire prior to four in the morning. The rest is immaterial with work barred at the start."

Simpson unfolded the details of his plan by slow and impressive degrees. As he said, he was a man of little education, but he knew it, and he also knew his limitations. Fifty years of struggle with the world had taught him many a matter that others go through the universe without hearing of. He explained that he was even then engaged in laying plans for a little bookmaking arrangement that promised large returns. One rich youth with a mania for horses had suffered at

the hands of the bookmakers at the Aqueduct track, and he wanted to regain his losses by means of a "system" that even then a wayfarer was exhibiting to him.

"It's up to you, Larry, to mingle with this innocent and tout him on to me, the rich, respectable and responsible bookmaker from Virginia, who simply aches to be a philanthropist for gilded stiffs like this one. You meet up with him, tease him along easy, and gradually work him over to me. You and him gets together and puts up a wad between you. I accept your wad for a two-thirds interest in my book, and—well the rest is a sin and a shame."

"But how about the real bookmaking? You've got to let him see you work, you know. How are you going to get a place in the line at the track? The bookmakers draw in, I'm told, and they're a pretty close corporation," asked Mr. Crandall.

"You leave that to yours truly, Larry," said Simpson. "I've not angled for suckers around this town for nothing. I'm in with a real boy who'll see me through when the time comes. If you say you're on, it's us for the outrigger. Does it go?"

"I must confess your proposition appeals to me," said Mr. Crandall. "Now that it's settled my soul turns in disgust from this plebeian beer. *A bas Gambrinus.* My system aches for the grape, Sim. Positively shrieks aloud for grape, and the grape I must have."

Simpson grinned and ordered a quart of wine, and watched Crandall absorb it with a manner that indicated he was gratifying a real soul-longing. When this interesting operation had been completed Mr. Crandall intimated he was prepared to take on any other attribute of luxury that Mr. Simpson saw fit to inflict upon him, and they left the saloon and headed for the nearest ready-made tailoring establishment on Broadway. Here Simpson settled for any reasonable request of the young man.

After he had been bathed, shaved, shined, and fed, Mr. Crandall permitted himself to be inserted into a few of the recent purchases and then allowed one or two expressions indicative of satisfaction to escape him. When he arrived at the Savoy, where it had been decided he should stop for a while at least, something of those few remaining sparks that mark the man of gentle upbringing began to appear about him and these moved the responsive Simpson to remark:

"I'm damned if I know what to call it, Larry, but you're the real thing. It ain't altogether the clothes, and it ain't just the clean look you've got, but it's something that looks mighty different from me when I'm togged out for a killin'."

And Simpson's decision was upheld by the servants of the hotel to the last man.

Where they acted upon the hints of said Simpson with more or less condescension, they took orders from Crandall with a slavish alacrity that meant volumes. Crandall had the air of the man born to the position and the servants recognized it, while Simpson wore the air of the man who forced his temporary wealth to act for him in place of it. It's a curious thing, but a man can successfully bluff his way before his associates, but the cold, penetrating eye of the hall boy or the waiter will search out his secret as infallibly as the sun brings the day with it. The English butler is said—and justly—to be the terror of the *nouveau riche*, but the American hotel servant is a terror of greater magnitude to the bluffer of whatever class.

When the two were left alone in the suite of rooms that stood in Crandall's name, that young man turned to Simpson and remarked:

"Now, we'll have the details by which I'm expected to reap the usual reward from the promising pigeon, Sim. Where do we begin, and how. Cackle, old socks, and don't cackle too loud."

"Well, it's this way, Larry," began Simpson settling himself back in a chair. "This here young sucker I've my eye on has more than is good for him to carry around. Proud papa has staked him to an unholly wad and it seems a shame to let him worry about keeping it. It's up to you and me to separate him from that same. This time I've been thinkin' we'd work the ancient bookmaker dodge same as I've told you. You and him gets together and puts up a bundle with me, who is the promisin' shark in this instance. I engages an outside man and a cashier and a sheet writer, and—for a consideration—takes Leopold's stool at the track for the day. One day's enough, Larry, for we'll trim him good and plenty, and do it quick."

Crandall listened and nodded at each point as Simpson went on. The trick was a new one to him and he had never even heard of it before, which goes to prove that even to the "wise" man there are still some hidden secrets in the art of "trimming the sucker." Suffice it to say that the details were arranged, and

instructions given Crandall just where and how to form the acquaintance of his man, and then the two went down to the café to refresh the inner man.

That night about eleven Mr. Crandall, wilted down to a proper angle in the corner of a hansom, drew up easily at "Lou" Kelly's establishment devoted to Dame Fortune, and wearily allowed himself to trickle forth from the vehicle. He strolled up to the gate and convinced the gentleman of color who peered at him through the wicket that he was not only rightfully entitled within, but that it would be little short of a criminal proceeding to keep him out in view of his inexperience. And once he had entered, the colored gentleman confided to the genial Mr. Kelly that "they was suah a loose pigeon dat come foah toh make moah pie," a remark that Mr. Kelly coincided in after a contemplative gaze at Mr. Crandall. When, some time later, Mr. Crandall emerged from the abode of chance with a neat roll of Mr. Kelly's toil-wrung collateral in his pocket, that genial soul laid the blame at Fortune's door and went back to berate the functionary who handled the faro box for Mr. Crandall. The same proceeding on two successive nights, while it made a deeper impression on the Kelly bank-roll, did not open the eyes of said Kelly to the fact that he was being "strung along" by a handier man with the layout than himself or his dealer.

In the course of a few more nights of this proceeding, however, the gilded youth referred to by Simpson was introduced, and by Mr. Kelly himself, and said gilded youth, immediately recognizing a kindred soul in Mr. Crandall, put forth a tentative feeler and was immediately taken to the Crandall bosom. Of the next week it is almost heartless to speak, for Mr. Kelly was made aware that he had been victimized by a co-worker in the world of graft in the person of Mr. Crandall, and was incensed that he had not long ago recognized the fact. After venting his spleen on the unfortunate colored gentleman aforementioned, Mr. Kelly brightened up considerably. The colored gentleman did not brighten to any appreciable extent, however, and

in relating his woes to the brother who served the excellent liquor, he complained:

"Ah was jus' a tyin' mah-shoe at de foot ob de staiks w'en Mistah Kelly he come a walkin' daown. Ah neveh heeahd him and de fust t'ing ah knows is w'en Mistah Kelly he kick meh right on mah mos' prom'nent featuah. Ah lan' ovah neah de do' and w'en ah get up ah say, dignified like: 'Mistah Kelly, sah, I wuz jus' a tyin' mah shoe, sah,' an' Mistah Kelly say kin' o' raspy: 'Blank yo brack hide, yo'se allers tyin' yo' shoe.' Ob course dey ain' nothin' foah meh toh say, Sam, an' ah jus' gotter talk it, but it sho' huht mah feelin's."

It was two nights after this episode at Mr. Kelly's that Mr. Crandall and young Mr. Burt, of Boston and Lowell, Mass., conferred together concerning the fortunes to be made in bookmaking. Mr. Crandall announced that he had been permitted to get a glimpse at a balance sheet of an acquaintance, and the said balance on a capitalization of \$2,000 had turned in something over \$8,500 for the one day.

"That appeals to me, you know," said Crandall easily. "My governor does not loosen with his change to the extent a man of my position would like, and I've simply got to find some means of increasing what he does give me. Curse it, you know, Burt, a gentleman needs so many things these old codgers never think of."

"That's my case exactly," explained young Mr. Burt. "I've got a hundred and one little expenses that simply run away with my cash. I've tried increasing it at Kelly's, but I can't say I've been very successful. I've got to have money. I wonder if I couldn't go in with you on this bookmaking idea."

"Well, to tell you truth, Burt, I'd rather you didn't," said Crandall, mentally calling himself seven kinds of a descendant of Ananias. "You see, there is always the off chance of something going wrong, and I wouldn't like you to suffer because of anything you might get into through me. I'm willing to take a chance with about \$5,000 I can spare, but with you it's a different thing, you know."

"Oh! I say, Foster, old man, you

know," expostulated Burt heatedly. "You don't want to keep all the good things to yourself, you know. I thought we were going to be pals and all that sort of thing, and here you want to back down like this. It's not a square deal. Hang me, if it is."

Crandall looked at him sadly and shook his head, muttering to himself that, "It was a blasted outrage to have them tumble in like this. It was no use laying one's self out to do some good work and have the roasted lark drop into one's mouth." But he said:

"Oh! well, old chap, if you take it like that, of course I've nothing to say. I'm going to meet my man to morrow, and you can come in—if he'll have you. I've

partially arranged with him to put up \$5,000 and split the profits with him. I'll ask him to let you in on the same terms. I don't suppose he'll object to increasing the capital. Then we'll have to divide one-third each. I think I can arrange it."

It is needless to say the "friend"—of course Mr. Simpson—hemmed and hawed over the proposal some time, but finally agreed to let Mr. Foster's friend, Mr. Burt, in on it on the same terms.

"It's going to be hard on me, though," explained Simpson. "You see, with a big bank roll like this I'll have to work like blazes myself and it's going to be no cinch. However, I've picked three good men, and we'll start in day after to morrow



DRAWN BY HOWARD V. BROWN

"Conferred together concerning the fortunes to be made in bookmaking."

at Belmont Park. You boys will have the cash here to morrow night, of course. Then we'll all hike down to the track and see what the ponies 'll do for us."

And the genial, confidence-inspiring Mr. Simpson, who was just then making use of the name of Larrabee, shook hands effusively and departed by the side door. Later Simpson and Crandall drank a few small drinks in the latter's apartment and arranged the details, which were absurdly simple.

"You explain to him, Larry," said Simpson, "that there's always the off chance of a big bet on a long shot walking home and putting us out of business. We won't grab off his roll the first day out, but I think we'll land him the second, and then you can frame him up to touchin' the old man for another bundle that he will hand us also, my son."

Crandall observed that undoubtedly the whole affair was of a crystal clearness to Mr. Simpson, but that as he was but an amateur in this particular proceeding he would be more than grateful for a little additional light on the subject. In other words, he didn't see his way clear to going it blind any further, and having a wholesome regard for his future welfare, he thought he ought to know all there was to know.

"In many ways you're a wise young fish," remarked Mr. Simpson, carelessly, as he drew the bottle within reach, "and bein' a wise young fish you naturally yearns to know all that there is to know. When you gets to be my age, Larry, you'll know that no one man can ever know all the angles about the graft. They is bright minds a constantly a studyin' on schemes for to put a crimp in other folks' bankrolls, and mostly them there schemes comes to somethin'. The foxiest grafter I ever run across was 'Slim' Summerfield, and he goes and gets himself trimmed by a boy with a new scheme for a mail order business. I've been acquainted with men that would steal the City Hall and then rent it out for an apartment hotel, but who'd fall for the wooziest yarn from a female bunco sharp. I don't aim to be the whole wise works myself, and I don't think you've got the head-piece to be, either. This is just by way of

warnin', and I'll tell you how we're a goin' to cop this Willie-boy's coin without danger to either of us."

And with that Mr. Simpson proceeded to lay bare the most simple of plots for the doing of the unwary. He explained, in smooth detail, his engagement of the three men who were to act as assistants—the runner, the sheet writer, and the cashier, and here all was, as Mr. Simpson tersely put it, "strictly on the level." It was from this point on that the tedious ways began. The book would be made in the regular manner for the first race. It would be balanced with great care after this, and for a portion of the second race it would be conducted also legitimately. Then a little rapid calculation after the horses were off would show just where they stood on the sheet. As soon as the winner was announced a big bet on that horse was to be sledged in on the book and this bet would wipe out the bank-roll. It was needless to observe that the bet would never be paid but the roll would be shifted to the pocket of Mr. Simpson. The backers of the book would then be informed that luck had gone against them and that operations would have to cease for the day, or until another roll was unearthed.

"The beautiful simplicity of the scheme makes me dizzy, Sim," said Mr. Crandall with emphasis. "I've been wasting my time all these years it would seem. All that is necessary is to dig up the angel and induce him to back the book, then you swing a phoney bet in and the angel's wings are yanked apart. It looks good to me, Sim. Very good, and I don't see how our good friends the police can afford to take cognizance of us."

"That's where that there education of yours has been neglected some more, my son," observed Mr. Simpson delicately. "You forgets entirely that at these here tracks the police is but a lot of short cards—deuces all of 'em—and that the real cheeses is the Pinks, and that these here same Pinks is accustomed to taking chances on the law that the regular bulls wouldn't have sense enough to take. If our sucker puts up a scream them near-coppers merely drags us into a corner of thebettin' shed and gives us the twister

for the bank roll, just as easy as can be, and when they hands it over to little Willy it's usually some short. We can't afford to roar about it, and they know it. You can't always dope out a Pink on form, Larry, and don't let that fact slip by you." Wherewith Mr. Simpson filled himself another portion from the bottle and regarded his young companion with austerity.

"And bein' as how we can't afford to have Clarence roar, it's up to you to take him by the ear and keep him quiet and gentle if he begins to get a ticklin' in his ears. You talk to him quiet and manly and get him off the track as soon as you can after the blow off, and ease his mind about the money, sort of showin' him how the best system that was ever put up is likely to slip up once in a while, and be the fortified young gent yourself with another bank roll for the next time out. That way we ought to get our Percy for a couple of falls before his head gets too big for his understandin'."

And Mr. Simpson hoisted himself out of the Morris chair, glanced in the glass to see if his diamond was still in position, which regrettable lack of confidence in Mr. Crandall's honor did not pain that young man a particle, and departed. Crandall himself sat where he was, and resolved himself into a ways and means committee for the betrayal of his friend in the future, for, he argued:

"Sim is all right for some of the points in the game, and this idea of his, while excellent in its general make-up, bears a possibility of further extension. That was a good tip about the Pinks. I'll have to work that out. It looks to me from here as if I might trim our good friend himself, after he has done what he can to Archibald the innocent."

Mr. Crandall then betook himself to his little white cot and passed out into the land of dreams with barely a possible effort, so easily did his conscience sit upon him.

The next day was the all important one, and Simpson and his aides were on their way to the race track in ample season. The dilettante Mr. Crandall, however, picked up his friend at the

latter's hotel and escorted him to breakfast and thence to a bank. The latter withdrew the sum agreed upon, Crandall supplemented it by an equal amount, and the pair thereupon climbed into an automobile and followed in the wake of Simpson. Arrived at the track they quickly passed the money over to Mr. Simpson and his cashier, and then watched the operation of opening the book. Simpson elevated himself on his stool with his slate, and his sheet writer and cashier took their stand behind him. The outside man was off down the line gathering quotations, and when the first crowd had piled in through the big gates the trap was set.

Young Burt certainly proved to be as excited as a callow youth should be, and insisted on dragging Mr. Crandall off to imbibe a little of the grape. He wanted to bet at every corner of the betting shed and in every book, and it was only by judiciously edging him out on the lawn in quest of "a couple of lady friends" that Crandall got him calmed down at all. It is almost heartless to describe the manner in which the finish was worked out, for, as Simpson had remarked, it was easier than purloining pop corn from a Brooklyn baby. While the finish was all that could be desired from Mr. Crandall's standpoint, others were not so well pleased.

It was just after the third race that Simpson's runner came out on the lawn and confided to Crandall that both he and Mr. Burt were required at once by Simpson. They raced back into the shed, and there found the excellent Simpson on his stool, the picture of woe and despondency. He had his hands in his pockets and the stub of a rank cigar in the corner of his mouth. His hat was sitting dejectedly over one ear and his very diamond had a dull gleam about it. Crandall almost laughed when he saw him, but he was compelled to follow the game.

"It's all off, boys," said Simpson. "The dish is in the ash can."

"What do you mean?" inquired the diplomatic Mr. Crandall. "Have we met with a reverse?"

"We're dumped complete and fine and dandy," replied Simpson.



DRAWN BY HOWARD V. BROWN

"They found Simpson the picture of woe and despondency."

"Do you mean we've lost anything?" inquired the youthful Mr. Burt. "Have we lost heavily?"

"About the limit. The book's broke and down and out, and it's us for the discard," observed Simpson.

"Everything gone?" asked Crandall with interest.

"Every red," said Simpson.

"Who or what delivered the final wallop?" asked Crandall.

"Well, you see it was this way," said Simpson. "We're getting along immense. We're all to the good on the first race, and about eight hundred further along on the second. I'm markin' prices nice and easy on the third, and everything looks rosy. Then a guy comes along and says to me: 'What's your limit on Blue Lass?' and I hands it to him that the limit is the roof and over, and he whips off one big yellow back for a thousand and shoves her over and says 'Give me all the Blue Lass that calls for,' and then he hands in his badge number and fades away. It looks easy money to me, and then that there dod-gasted Blue Lass roams home in front by three lengths and the price is enough to give a decent man a hot foot. It's 12 to 1, and that makes just thirteen thousand I has to hand back that bloke. It's heart breaking and no less."

"Let's see the sheet," said Crandall. The cashier passed it over, and sure enough there was the bet with the badge number, 22493, opposite it. "Did you toss the bundle to him?" asked Crandall, while young Mr. Burt was looking pale and ill and ready for a bier with candles.

"What else can I do with three Pinks a watchin' every move and waitin' to lam me if I try to crawl the fence?" answered Simpson in an injured tone. "Of course I hands it to him."

"Well, it's hard luck, blamed hard luck, and that's no idle jest," said Crandall. "Cheer up, Burt. We'll wallop her again to-morrow and make that bank roll look like its big enough to choke an elephant. Come on. Let's get a drink," and he dragged the unresisting Burt off with him to the bar. Simpson began to pack up, and was putting the finishing

touches to that operation after paying his men, when he was startled by the appearance of Mr. Crandall.

Young Mr. Crandall was debonair and self-possessed to a degree, and had with him a steward of the track and two unruly looking Pinkerton men. The quartet approached and Crandall said very softly:

"This is the man, gentlemen. I made one bet on the third race with him. I laid one thousand against the field on Blue Lass at 12 to 1. He refuses to settle, claiming the bet was never made."

"Let's see your sheet, old hoss," said one of the Pinkerton men.

It would be impossible to describe Mr. Simpson's looks as he listened. His jaw was hanging loosely and the cigar was drooping from it at a pitifully depressed angle. His eyes looked like quaint fish scales and he was pale and shocked.

"I—I—he's a blame liar," he finally blurted out. "I ain't never laid no bet with him. He's a four-flush and a butt-in. He never had a red in his life, the little runt. Why blast me, I'll fix—"

"Now, you'd better behave before you get worse and more of it, my friend," observed the Pinkerton officer. "You just shoot that sheet over here or it'll be the worse for you. I want it and I want it quick. I've seen you welchers before, my lad. Do you know what would happen if some one was to cry 'welcher' here and point to you? Why, they'd pick you up with a dust pan. Now let's have that sheet," and he held out his hand.

The cashier had been staring at the scene with wide open eyes and he made a move as if to vanish, but thought better of it. He opened his satchel and pulled out the sheet and handed it over, but Simpson grabbed it and tried to tear it up. The two officers seized him and stopped the performance while Crandall smoked idly and watched the progress of his little scheme with interest. The sheet was finally rescued from Simpson, and one of the Pinkertons turned to Crandall and asked:

"If you made the bet you know the number you gave, of course."

"Surest thing, you know," replied the



DRAWN BY HOWARD V. BROWN

"Mr. Simpson grunted with satisfaction." See page 88

graceful Mr. Crandall. "The number's 22493, and the amount coming to me is just thirteen thousand, and he's got it. I can use the money."

The steward and the other pair opened the folded sheet and quickly found the entry of the false bet. There it stood for all the world to see. There was nothing for it apparently but to make the would-be welcher disgorge, and despite the bad language, the howls, the execrations, and the threats, the cashier was collared, the satchel opened and the sum total, amounting to \$12,555, was counted out.

"Here's his total bank, young feller,"

said the Pinkerton officer. "I'd advise you to take it, for it's all he's got."

"That will answer my purpose," said Crandall, coolly. "Give it here, and many thanks," and he took the roll and placed it in his pocket. "If you gentlemen don't mind detaining this honest person a few minutes I'll hop my car and homeward fly, for I don't want to get a touch of lead from that gun I see he carries," and Crandall pointed out the bulging hip pocket of Mr. Simpson, the speechless.

While the Pinks and the steward detained the frantic grafter and read him a

lesson on the evils of Welching, Crandall quietly went after Burt, and finding him trying to put himself on the exterior of a quart bottle of rye, removed him from the scene.

He took him to the hotel and tried to brace the young fellow up, and finally succeeded after some heroic effort. It was while in the midst of this operation that a boy entered with the card of Mr. James Larrabee.

This was not in the least astonishing to Mr. Crandall, however, for it was one of the things he had counted on. He merely gave the bell boy a dollar and instructed him to say to Mr. Larrabee, *alias* Simpson, that he had gone out and would return at 8 o'clock. When this small matter had been dispatched, Mr. Crandall collected what belongings he wished to retain and packed them in a dress suit case which he removed to his bedroom. Then he ordered refreshment for Mr. Burt and himself and partook of the same with due appreciation. After which he looked at his watch and observed it was a quarter before the hour set for Mr. Simpson's re-appearance. He placed a hundred dollar bill in an envelope and placed it on the writing desk, where he inscribed the name and address of young Mr. Burt. Procuring a stamp he affixed that also and walking into the corridor dropped it in the mail chute.

"That will keep him in rum until he hears from his papa, anyway," said Mr. Crandall to himself. When he returned to his room he informed Mr. Burt that he was about to leave him for a few minutes, but that he should make himself at home in the interim, and that on his return he

would evolve a method of recouping their losses of the day. Mr. Crandall then retired to the bath room and gazed out into the night. He noted, some three floors below him, the roof of a building, and taking a stout ball of twine from his pocket he tied one end to the suit case and lowered that article gently from the window to the roof below.

"I should imagine Sim will be anxious about this time to get a sight of a certain person about my build," he said to himself, "and it, therefore, behooves me to deprive him of that pleasure. I think I'll forsake this hostelry."

Putting on his gloves he stepped out on the fire escape and made his way down the two floors until he came to the end of the ladder. There he found a drop of twelve feet, and easily compassed that. Picking up the suit case, Mr. Crandall wandered over the graveled roof to the rear of the building, and descended another iron staircase to the ground. He emerged from the door in the fence of the plot at the back to the street and—was promptly collared by Mr. Simpson, who grunted with satisfaction as he banged Mr. Crandall's hat over the latter's astonished eyes.

"It kind of seemed to me that you'd try some little escape like this here," observed that astute gentleman. "Now, you just walk over to that cab and get within and you and me'll talk business as we drive a bit. I'm willin' to split half, but blast me if I like a hog."

Mr. Crandall did meekly as he was bid and Mr. Simpson followed him. The door slammed and the cab went forth into Central Park.

## Realism

BY ALLAN P. AMES

When a writer of romantic fiction, absolutely dependent upon the fertility of his brain, suddenly finds that useful organ barren and unproductive as an alkali desert you cannot blame him for sharing his trouble with his wife. Es-

pecially if he is lucky enough to have one like Lucia. At first a certain sense of shame and reluctance to annoy her with unfamiliar worries had kept me silent; but the craving for sympathy finally became so strong that one evening, after a

particularly discouraging hour of shadow-chasing, I told her all about it.

"It's partly your fault," I said with a lightness I did not feel. "When a man has gained his heart's desire he has no further use for the pinions of fancy. Life—the actual, practical thing—appeals to him with a fullness that leaves no room for fantasies. Do you understand my fix? I'm as badly off as a singer who has lost his tongue, or a fingerless pianist."

Other women might have soothed a man and led his thoughts away to pleasanter themes. My wife could do all those things; but when occasion demanded she could be practical and helpful. Now she came over and sat on the arm of my Morris chair.

"I read of a man once," said she, "who lost both arms and learned to play the piano with his toes. If you find it impossible to write romantic fiction any longer why don't you try the other kind? Since the realities of life appeal to you so strongly, and I know exactly what you meant when you said that, write about them."

"Shades of Hawthorne!" I cried. "Lucia, you don't realize what you are advising. I've scoffed at realists all my life long. You haven't forgotten those essays of mine that made such a stir in *The View*? I held then, and I shall always hold, that in the true artistic sense purely realistic fiction isn't literature at all. It's not a grade higher than first-class, descriptive newspaper writing."

"No doubt you are right," replied my wife gently, "although I have thought that the faithful portrayal of contemporary life is the novelist's highest mission. But I don't mean to discuss that. You must write something, and, since your imagination seems to have struck, realism is your only resort—unless I take in washing. I suppose I could do that if your prejudices are unconquerable."

"Now, Lucia, don't be absurd. I could go back to my desk in *The View* office tomorrow, if I wanted to."

"But that would mean New York and apartment life again. I'd rather be an independent wash-lady among these hills," she waved a hand toward the moon-lit landscape visible through the window, "I'd

rather be the humblest here than the proudest in Harlem."

"But what shall I write about?" I asked, weakening. "You wouldn't have me lay bare the secrets of our home, would you?"

"That's not necessary. Select some interesting character in this village, conveniently located where you can study him faithfully; take notes, and when you have enough put them together in a book. It's easy enough."

"It sounds easy when you say it; but where are there any interesting characters around here? Seems to me our neighbors are hopelessly commonplace."

"There's one good story in every life," said Lucia. "At least, I've heard so. And our neighbors are not as uninteresting as you think. While you've been searching for inspiration within the walls of your study I've been getting acquainted."

Thereupon she told me about the Blaagens. At first, in spite of her excellent description, I was not impressed. Why several thousand persons, with plenty of petty troubles and pleasures of their own, should pay to read about the petty troubles and pleasures of others, was a thing I could not, and still cannot comprehend. Moreover, I did not relish the method of procedure she suggested.

But Lucia insisted. "All you have to do," she explained, "is to get chummy with old Father Blaagen so that he will let you stay around and hear him talk and watch his dear, funny family. Then come home and write it all down. That seems simple enough for an ex-newspaper interviewer like you."

This is not meant for a story of Blaagen or the Blaagens. It is merely the story of a story about them. Aside from his powers as a conversationalist, perhaps "monologuist" describes him better, Blaagen differed little from the average middle-class product of the Vaterland, reconciled to, and thoroughly familiar with, the institutions of his adopted country, but inseparable from native habits and modes of thought. Though always intensely earnest, even on the most trivial subject, much that he said was tinged with unexpected humor. There was humor even

in his unconquerable Teutonic pessimism, for nothing could be more ludicrous than the contrast between his spoken opinions and his life. In deed he was the soul of cheerfulness and charity, in theory the gloomiest of egoists, upholding the darkest doctrines of German fatalism.

Three months passed, during which I made almost daily pilgrimages to his little grocery. At the end of that time the top drawer of my desk held a fat stack of manuscript containing something over 100,000 words. It was a series of sketches, written without conscious striving for any effect of continuity. I had only transcribed from a trained and retentive memory the best of Blaagen's sayings, his narratives of personal experiences, and the most entertaining incidents of his family life that chanced to fall beneath my notice. But when I reviewed the collection I was gratefully surprised to observe how each section dropped into close relation to the whole. All the stuff required was intelligent condensation and rearrangement to make it run as smoothly as a continuous narrative. Of course there was no plot, none had been intended; but the light that each succeeding chapter cast upon the principal character furnished a satisfactory progressive interest. Of purely creative work, the whole production contained less than one short story such as I used to write in the days before my marriage.

When the last touch had been added Lucia, utilizing a recent accomplishment, ran off a clean copy on my typewriter. At the final moment my old habits reasserted themselves in a desire for a high-sounding title; but Lucia held out for simplicity, and in the end I had the good sense to agree. We named the collection—I cannot bring myself to dignify it with the name "novel"—"Neighbor Nich'las." Then I expressed the manuscript to Spielman's house, preceded by a letter heralding its arrival; and after that there was nothing to do but wait.

It was an anxious waiting; for unless the book were accepted and published promptly and with some degree of success there was nothing left but New York once more and the old work on *The*

*View*. I could not share Lucia's confidence; moreover, I was haunted by a picture of Spielman's pained surprise when his head reader laid before him this evidence of my apostacy from the ranks of the idealists.

The surprise turned out to be mine and anything but painful. Instead of reproaches, Spielman wrote a personal letter of thanks—yes, actually thanks, and predicted that "Neighbor Nich'las" would be the success of the year. "You've hit the popular taste at exactly the right moment," said he. "It is just the kind of book we've been looking for."

Remembering that publishers are not infallible judges of their own wares, even this encouragement did not make me sanguine. But when the book appeared in April and went into the fifth edition inside of a month I could doubt no longer. I do not attempt to explain it. I never did. Personally I see in the book only a string of passably well written sketches, nearly devoid of incident and remarkable only for fidelity to the smallest detail of the life they portrayed. Spielman's firm had given them an attractive dress and embellished the pages with characteristic drawings by a famous illustrator who had made her reputation in just this kind of work, and they advertised persistently and well; but none of these reasons alone was sufficient to account for such amazing popularity.

But success needs no apologies. After the first shock of incredulous amazement I accepted mine as complacently as if I had never expected anything else. We paid off the mortgage on our little place and made a few improvements, and then the royalites flowed steadily into the local bank, where, as summer advanced, they accumulated at a rate equalled only by the increasing deference of the cashier.

Politeness from the bank people and growls from the postmaster who resented the unprecedeted size of my mail were the first recognition my success gained from the townspeople. Occasional summer visitors had their attention called to the rising celebrity among them; but anything like general recognition was withheld until the occasional literary pilgrim was followed by the interviewer and the

photographer and I began to figure in Sunday "specials."

And Blaagen! Did he wonder at the sudden end of my visits? Did he miss such a rarely attentive listener? I never knew. In the labor of preparing the book for the publisher and the excitement that followed I all but forgot his existence. Now, it was recalled to me by an unlooked-for series of distressing events.

It is strange that even his townsmen failed to connect the Nich'las of the book with the local German grocer; for, dreading to destroy the verisimilitude that was the breath and life of the sketches, I had drawn my portraits with what seemed to me unmistakable fidelity to the original. I can account for their obtuseness only by the practice, common to most readers, of regarding all fiction as the unadulterated product of imagination.

The discovery of my model was left to a clever young woman sent up to "do" me for a well known syndicate that served a string of Sunday supplements stretching from Maine to California. By this time the public prints had familiarized their readers with practically all there was to learn about me and my surroundings; how I looked, how Lucia looked, how our cook and housemaid and gardener looked—we kept three servants now—what we wore, how we lived and worked and took our simple pleasures. Naturally, therefore, the young lady I speak of was keen for something new. She found it in Blaagen, whom I had no cause to doubt she discovered without aid, or at least by accident. I, at least, never hinted at his existence and confessed the truth with the greatest reluctance when she taxed me with it. The article she wrote, headed "*The Real 'Neighbor Nich'las'*" neglected me and mine entirely and revealed to a host of eager readers all she had been able to find out about Blaagen and the Blaagens. There were portraits of the whole family, singly and in group, and the accuracy of the descriptions proved that she had studied them faithfully.

The appearance of this article in a dozen or more widely circulated newspapers marked an epoch in Blaagen's life

more important even than that which success brought to mine. That Sunday night he went to bed famous. The public had read its fill about the writer, but the real Nich'las was comparatively unknown. The failing stream of visitors quickly swelled to its former size, but its course was diverted from my abode to his. From an unknown shopkeeper in a quiet New England village he blossomed in a single week into a personage of national repute.

This fresh access of curiosity gave the sale of the book new impetus; yet right gladly would I have resigned the extra income to have been spared the sad sequel. For fame to Blaagen meant nothing but annoyance. He never could tell when his Teutonic love of privacy was to be shocked by prying, sometimes impudent, curiosity seekers. If he barred them from his house they followed him on the street, and accosted him, undaunted by the sulky silence with which he generally received their advances. They seemed to think that reading the book entitled them to the same consideration from him that they necessarily received from me, forgetting that to Blaagen, long-suffering politeness was not the valuable asset it was to me. For me publicity was so much capital, but Blaagen's humble business was not the kind that profited by such advertising. His callers had no need of small groceries; and although a few made trifling purchases an excuse for intrusion, their trade scarcely compensated him for the loss of regular home customers, who were frightened away by the fear that they also might fall beneath the fierce light of publicity that beat upon him and his surroundings.

Blaagen was patient. Far from wondering at his final outburst, I marvelled that it was so long deferred. A large and uncommonly curious group of excursionists had invaded his premises, and, being refused entrance to the house, had begun to console themselves by picking his pears. In justice to them I will say that they wanted the fruit only as souvenirs; but Blaagen refused to appreciate the compliment. Upon the vandals he descended like a North Sea gale, ably supported by his sturdy wife and oldest boy carrying

basins of water. There was just one man among the unwelcome visitors, and at him Frau Blaagen discharged the contents of her basin with sure aim and gratifying effect. The invaders fled, but the drenched male displayed his calibre by hunting up the local magistrate and swearing out a warrant for Blaagen's arrest.

Nich'las was apprehended for breach of the peace, and unluckily I did not learn of his plight until someone else had furnished his bail. In due time he was tried and quickly acquitted, inasmuch as it was proved that he had no part, even a hortatory one, in the water-throwing. Before this, however, I was in the toils.

At a much later date I was able to look back upon this persecution with calmness and even humorous appreciation, but while it continued I was supremely uncomfortable. Blaagen was held up to sympathy as a gentle martyr, I to universal detestation as a literary vampire who had sucked him dry of material and left him a helpless victim of vulgar curiosity. The inconveniences he suffered were magnified by my critics many-fold, some reports going so far as to assert that he was reduced to penury, his cozy home broken up, and his family thrown upon the bounty of their neighbors. A few of the most charitable took up a subscription to enable him to seek some far secluded spot to which my book had not penetrated. In contrast to this pathetic picture, I was represented wallowing in ill-gotten luxury, heedless of the sufferings of those upon whose humble shoulders I had risen to wealth and fame. My royalties were fabulously estimated at six figures.

Now the truth of the matter is, if anyone contemplated flight it was Lucia and I. Notwithstanding my efforts to guard against it, newspaper and magazine articles retailing all manner of absurdities would find their way into my wife's hands. Women, I found, delighted to cut them out of the papers and mail them to her in innocent-looking envelopes, and frequently I came upon her reading these clippings with tears of sympathy for the fictitious woes they described. In spite of repeated assurances from me, Lucia

could not convince her tender heart that our German neighbors were not being hounded to the verge of self-destruction. The privilege of soothing her conscience with gifts was denied her. The Blaagens promptly returned everything we sent, whether it was money or a basket of Lucia's delicious preserves; and when, yielding to Lucia's entreaty, I presented myself at their door to try the force of personal persuasion, I came near furnishing first blood for the new bulldog stationed there to warn off callers. After that, of course, there was nothing for me but to sit tight and wait for the storm to blow over, while Lucia wrestled with her Puritan conscience as best she could. So bent was she upon making some adequate sacrifice in return for the trouble we had caused the Blaagens that she even suggested withdrawing "Neighbor Nich'las" from sale, and it was with considerable difficulty I convinced her that my contract with Spielman made this impossible.

Help came at last, though from an undreamed-of source. One November afternoon Spielman ran up from New York to see me on a matter he had already written two letters about. He wanted me to write another book as a companion to "Neighbor Nich'las," something in similar vein, if not an avowed sequel.

"Well, I suppose they're after you," he observed when we had gone into my study and closed the door.

I thought he referred to the persecution I have just been describing, and said so.

"No, I don't mean that," he replied with a smile. "Of course you haven't minded this newspaper talk. In fact, you ought to have welcomed it, because it boosted your sales as nothing else could. To tell you the truth, old man, we take great credit for that scheme. It was original with Oswald, our head advertising man, and I do think he managed it right cleverly, although I believe he had to do little besides start the ball rolling. He tipped off one of his friends in the Continental Press Syndicate, you know, about there being a real living Nich'las."

While this news left me almost speechless from astonishment, it served to

strengthen a resolution already formed.

"I meant the publishers," went on Spielman, reverting to his first remark. "Own up, now; you've had some very tempting offers to desert us?"

I silently nodded.

"But you haven't accepted any?" he asked in sudden alarm.

I assured him I had not, and he continued, evidently vexed with himself for having displayed anxiety:

"In a week or more all this twaddle about the martyrdom of your worthy model will be forgotten and the public will be asking when you intend to give them something more. Now we want you to write us a sequel to bring out next spring, or, if you think that's too soon, next fall, a year from now."

Although my answer was already made up, I let him proceed without interruption, and after a careful explanation of the advantages to be gained by adopting his plan he came down solidly to business. For another book of the kind he suggested I should receive, over and above the customary royalties, five thousand dollars, half to be paid when I signed the contract and the other half when the complete manuscript was delivered.

Although the offer was generous beyond all my expectations, it did not for a moment shake my resolution. Before replying I went to the door and called Lucia, who, as I had anticipated, was in the next room anxiously awaiting the outcome of the interview. When she had entered I asked Spielman to repeat the terms.

"O, you don't need a witness," said he, with manifest annoyance. "Here's the whole thing on paper ready for you to sign in duplicate. I mean what I say."

"I don't doubt that for a minute," said I, "but I have a particular reason for wanting my wife to understand your offer and appreciate its liberality."

"Oh, all right," said Spielman; and he explained the proposed transaction to Lucia in the utmost detail. My wife said never a word, but the appealing glance she gave me spoke volumes. Desiring to spare her further suspense, I hastened to settle the matter.

"Spielman," said I, "the dollars haven't

been coined that could induce me to go through that experience again. I wrote '*Neighbor Nich'las*' in violation of every artistic instinct, because I was in desperate need of money. I'm not proud of it nor the notice it won me. It was an expedient, pure and simple, and now that such necessity is never likely to arise again I can see no reason why I should attempt a repetition. In short, Spielman, I am through with realism. Hereafter, thank Heaven, I can write for pleasure. If the popular taste happens to agree with mine, so much the better; but I'll never cater to it again if I'm the last idealist in the world."

"But my dear fellow," gasped the astonished publisher, "can you afford it? Think of your reputation, think of the debt you owe the public. A man of your fame ceases to be his own master. Have you no sense of obligation?"

"Yes," I answered with a touch of bitterness, "they bought the book. I can't see why, but they did buy it by thousands, and it would be hypocritical to deny that the financial returns were welcome; but as for a debt, I don't acknowledge any. There may have been one at first, but I've paid it long ago. The public has taken it out in this persecution of poor Blaagen and me. If there's any balance it's on our side of the account."

"But surely you don't intend to give up writing," he persisted. "You are a young man, even in these days of youthful successes. You are not going to spend the rest of your life in idleness? If you won't give us another book like this one, what will you write?"

"Romance!" I shouted, springing to my feet. "Royal romance! No more glorification of the commonplace, no more crawling, microscopic, milk-and-water studies of the mean and trite and trivial. I'm going back to the large and elemental: love and war and soaring adventure. I'll write for people with red blood in their veins, for people who see every day more than enough of the colorless, ordinary side of life, and seek books of fiction to experience its thrilling moments. If I can tell a good, stirring story that will make a tired man forget

his cares, I won't give a whoop whether it's true to life or not."

I stopped abruptly and sat down, realizing that I was edging on the ridiculous and that more than enough had been said to show Spielman the uselessness of further argument.

"Well," he remarked, as he rose to go, "I don't just make you out, but I can't help admiring your enthusiasm. If it were your first book I might diagnose your case as the intoxication of success. Undoubtedly you believe every word you say—now. When you change your mind let us hear from you."

When he was gone I turned to Lucia. Throughout the interview she had remained silent, but in the proud poise of her head, in her sparkling eyes and flushed cheeks I beheld a reflection of all my zeal. She, at least, thought me neither

quixotic nor absurd. For a moment we looked at each other without speaking.

"Well?" I queried at last.

"Five thousand dollars, and a percentage besides," she mused. "O, I wish all those horrid people who called you a vampire and things like that could know what you are sacrificing."

"What difference does it make?" I answered. "You and I know it, that's the main thing."

"No, the rest don't count much," she agreed. "Still, I wish they could know."

"Perhaps I do owe them an explanation," said I. "I might write a story about the whole affair, sort of a valedictory to the 'Neighbor Nich'las' style of literature."

"Oh, please do," she begged.

And so, to gratify Lucia, you understand, I have.

## The Belated Triumph of Giovanni

BY ROY E. NORTON

In marked contrast to the funeral band, as it swung down the street at the head of the procession, playing a doleful and most heart-stirring dirge, were the happy, smiling faces that peered from carriages. Now and then, some more curious than others stretched dangerously far out of the cab windows better to catch a glimpse of the sinuous line; but they must, indeed, lean far to gather even a kaleidoscopic view of the waving plumes surmounting the somewhat battered and time-worn hearse that brought up the extreme rear. It came slowly and meekly under the pilotage of a semi-somnolent and wholly indifferent driver, as if it were but a minor portion of the pageant.

Certainly of less importance seemed the dead man at the rear than the gorgeously clad figure at the extreme front. Ah—that was a great day for Vicente Suzzalo. It was his first appearance as *grand marchal* at a funeral.

It was Vicente who laid out the formation and line of march. It was Vicente who pompously announced that he would

march first of all, with a beautifully gilded baton, profusely streamered with red and black ribbon. It was Vicente who said the bands should play when he gave the signal, and it was Vicente, so others afterward somewhat complainingly informed, who planned such a long line of march through the streets of Chicago that it required from sunrise to sunset for its traversement.

It has been pointed out, too, with that pride which we all of us have on discovering a real originator and hero, that it was Vicente who induced the undertaker to hold the corpse from Monday until Sunday, that the parade might attract greater attention as it lugubriously smiled its way through the main thoroughfares of a Sabbath-observing city.

"Eet was most unfor-r-tunit," said my friend Tomicich, "zat zee man die on Moonday—eet is such long time to hev heem ar-r-ound eef you wait teel Soonday; but ze gendarmes weel not let ze societé hev ze gran parade on wikk days. Ze gendarmes say eet ees so eenconvenience

to hev ze traffic stop for maybe fort' or  
fortafive meenit."

Then in the quaint dialect so reminiscent of the blues and grays of his own little country—the buffing block between Italy and all her neighbors—he told me the happy tale. Not of the man who wore the immense yellow sash in resplendent leadership, but of the one who rode behind.

It was a profoundly simple story of magnificent victory, threaded through like romance of old with the golden woof of love-light, steely gleam of vendetta, and final grasp of mastery. In the telling of that Titanic struggle against what for a time seemed implacable fate, I almost forgot that I had known the quiet, little old man who was the real hero.

He was Giovanni de Christo Salvini, not connected with the actor family, but of high birth and proud lineage. True, his father had inadvertently lost his life at the end of a Swiss gibbet and his grandfather, in an equally careless manner, had got himself shot full of holes for robbing a church. But he came of "An superbly excellent and highly deestinguish familly whose blood flowed only noble for—well—meb' tree tousan' yaire." He once told me his family pride was such that it required years of effort on the part of his mother—and here he devoutly crossed himself—to induce him to

forego the more honorable occupation of brigandage for that of banana selling. His life had been one long struggle against callous fate.

Born of an uncommercial line, he failed in the banana business "Because so many little boys wanted one for nothing," also, because on cold winter nights, when he stood with his little cart on the corner, if prospective purchasers asked if his wares were frozen, he truthfully but unwisely answered "yes." In the mean-



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"Conradi sold bananas and waxed fat." See page 96

time his rival, Conradi, prospered. I never became acquainted with Conradi, but wish I could have known him. He must have been a remarkable creature. Tomicich's neighbor, who is a German, told me Conradi was "a cow, a pig-dog, and a dirty pocket."

Any way Conradi sold bananas and waxed fat. And always across the corner

from his stand stood the kindly-eyed, meek and christian-like little descendant of a line of brigands, giving away, from pure goodness of heart, his meagre stock in trade to hungry little waifs, or refusing to sell bad goods. So do the wicked prosper.

To America came a fresh importation of wanderers from the "Sunny-land," and among the bundles, and bags, and bales, dumped out of the steerage into Castle Garden was one Rosa Mancini. With friends she came to Chicago. An Italian she was and of marriageable age, being nearly fourteen years old. Ripe were her charms in the sight of both Giovanni and Conradi.

They speedily saw her when she, with a beautiful collection of flowers, opened business on a State Street corner. Each warily learned her home address and incontinently neglected business to be present when she played the concertina in the evening hours.

I don't think in the beginning that there was any great bitterness between the rivals. Giovanni scorned Conradi with the natural and eminently proper hatred of the *haute noblesse* for the proletarian and untitled occupant of the lowlands.

"I to fear the progress of that dago in the affections of



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"Rosa played the concertina."

the signora," he used to say, throwing his head back proudly and shrugging until his head would recede turtle-wise between his shoulders, "*Hasacre! Br-r-r-r!*" Thus in his inimitable way did Giovanni manifest self-confidence.

As with the birds when mating, all was happiness during this season. For love-making is much alike, whether softly sung from a gondola beneath a Venice moon, or gently whispered on an edelweiss-strewn slope of the Alps. Tenderness is not confined to place; so high thoughts swept through the little room off Milwaukee avenue, where Rosa dwelt in the bosom of nine families. The dreaminess of garlic salads, or the ambrosia of fresh-drawn and white-capped pails of beer ever lingered around the memory of those delightful days.

For Rosa those were trying days of indecision. She hardly knew, poor little daughter of the grape and sun, which one she loved the best. Each was so good and each seemed so prosperous and so much in earnest. Poetry and romance ran riot through her pretty head, so the casual observer would have selected him of the noble blood as the favorite. But, alas! In an idle moment of overconfidence Giovanni told her he had saved but \$4.33, and for him the battle was lost. For did not Conradi now flaunt three Americano five-dollar gold pieces suspended from his bangle bracelet?

Giovanni did not attend the wedding. As the windy gusts of wintry night whistled bitingly around his corner on North Clark street, he sold bananas. Not with kindness and dignity as of old, but with harsh shoutings and mechanically.

Of a sudden, Giovanni, the cheerful, the improvident, the liberal, had become soured. He "short-changed" old customers, sold frozen bananas with lying tongue, and cruelly struck one little waif who helped himself to a meagre supper. He put his foot on a coin a lady dropped and, after assisting her in a fruitless search, sequestered it. He gave a poor girl of the neighborhood but four bananas for half-a-dozen and violently refused to make good the deficit when she returned and demanded a recount.

No one was ever certain how it hap-

pened, but shortly after Conradi returned to work, his honeymoon came abruptly and tragically to a close. He was found in an alley one night, where he had fallen across his little cart, cruelly thrust to the death with a knife. The police said but one blow had been struck and that from behind. By whom? No one ever knew. Chicago doesn't stop long because a fruit vendor has been murdered. It is too big and he too little. Almost any life in such a city is insignificant, unless the loser happens to have much money or political prestige. So after but few days the trifling incident was forgotten.

But to Giovanni there came the sharpest shaft of Fate's irony in the funeral of his former rival. Conradi had long been a member of a burial society, and in addition to that he had left some means. His heart-broken bride also added to the splendor of that great ceremony by selling the newly purchased stove, disposing of all personal property of her deceased spouse, and with the proceeds hiring a drum corps.

Who is there of the last generation that can ever forget that funeral? Or the proudly swinging lines of the society at the front, each man wearing on his breast as if it were a medal for valor, the immense gilt-fringed insignia of the order with its brass pendants trailing almost to the waist? Some had two. Others of the more distinguished class belonged even to several societies and wore medals of each—for what would a society be without a medal? Then there were banners, and the burial society band, and, last of all, the drum corps.

Old-time teamsters tell yet of that funeral, and how it took so long to pass a given point that street cars and teams were blocked and congested on the downtown streets for miles back.

So it was that a final blaze of glory, like the tail of an exceptionally brilliant comet, marked the end of Conradi.

The noble blood of Giovanni fairly boiled with envy as he witnessed from the curb the passing of his rival. Not until the evening when he experienced the widow's scornful refusal of his hand in marriage, however, was his cup of bitter-

ness filled to bounds. Giovanni had never been a drinking man, hence I doubt whether his continued libations brought either balm for the defeat of love, gratification for partial revenge, or soothing for the sting of final vanquishment. Nor did the ever-present ripple of praise for the beautiful funeral add to his happiness and serve to bring back the little, old, mild-tempered man, whose ear-rings dangled when he quietly laughed at a joke, or whose call of wares was filled with a sweetness that comes only from one who knows and appreciates the joys of living.

In time, the colony grew to know him as a man with a purpose. I doubt if they ever knew of the dread canker that slowly ate away his heart. They knew only that he had taken to trade, that he had become a shoemaker and a man inflexibly set on accumulation and inexorably opposed to expenditure.

No one worked as did Giovanni, the heir of a noble house, over his last. Through the long hot days and into the coolness of the night, when seductive winds from the waters wooed other shoemakers to the lake front, Giovanni's hammer might be heard steadily tap-tapping. Into the early hours of dawn this smileless and mercenary little old man sought but one thing—the addition of "coin of the realm to his purse," or maybe some other place of secretion.

As years went on he grew more feeble, more uncommunicative, and more bent, but never less determined in appearance. Plainly Giovanni was a man with a purpose. Strange whispers went through the neighborhood which knew him best, and often was heard the word which makes men from the border country shudder, "*Venedetta*." For could any thing else so change a man?

Why else should one who had been so kindly and care-free become so coldly provident? Little children went singing by his door, but never ventured in. Forgotten and of the past was the generous banana man, who gave to the hungry waif with the *cameraderie* of the street. Forgotten even as Rosa, who had shifted from the scene as unconcernedly as she came,

happy, and probably forgetful of her brief wedded life.

Through all these years just one thing seemed to be of interest to the aging Giovanni, and that was a funeral. Not even the pompous undertaker for the colony, or the most ardent follower of society funerals, had the vast knowledge of burial detail that accumulated and surged through the brain of the little shoemaker of Milwaukee avenue. He would even grow verbose and reminiscent at times when waiting customers discussed previous ceremonies.

"Ha!" he would say excitedly, "but Caprian only have twenty-seven hacks and one band with nineteen pieces." Or, again, "*Si-si*, but although there were two bands at Garibaldi's funeral they have but ze twenty-tree piece all told."

In time he became the funeral umpire of the colony—the court of last appeal on everything pertaining to interment. His prompt recounting of the number of instruments in the band, the number of conveyances, and even the number of mourners was always accepted as final. The losing disputant would humbly confess mistake, for did not Giovanni know all about funerals?

Nor no man so well posted on cost as he. He could tell the latest scale of the musicians' union and what membership each burial society or patriotic organization claimed. He was a coffin catalogue and knew for how much hacks could be hired singly, in job lots, or by wholesale.

Yet, all his profundity of funeral knowledge availed naught to prevent his becoming a fairly prominent participant in one himself. For on one early spring-time day, when the snows had gone and the mud and desolation of Chicago were gradually giving way under the rays of the north-bound sun, he died.

Giovanni's end came suddenly. The priest was hastily called and went away solemnly shaking his head. Confessions may have been made; neither Vicente, who saw him last, nor I, can say. But I think, and so does Vicente, that the habit of secrecy formed from the banana cart to the grave had been so strong that possibly the worthy man heard more of



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"Would grow verbose and reminiscent at times."

what had been done than what was to be. Why, though, should a dying man tell even the *padre* of all his ambitions yet to be fulfilled? Is a father's province that of deeds or dreams?

As Vicente gravely argues, "Eet was da fazzair's beeziness Giovanni to put in Heaven; but you-a betta your life Giovan he pay for da cabs data tek heem."

In his inimitable English—a conglom-

eration of Italian, Slav, and German—Vicente once told me of that last visit. Told me how he had held the jubilantly dying Giovanni in his arms and listened attentively to the loving and beautiful plan for the most magnificent funeral ever held. Heard the history of how through the long years each tap of the hammer had meant one more step toward the final triumph of Giovanni de

## THE RED BOOK

Christo Salvini, a triumph that was to end forever the glorification over the funeral of his rival; listened to pathetic descriptions of how when two dollars were added to the ever-swelling fund, the blue-blooded descendant of a three-thousand-year-old house would say, "Eef I die to-morrow, eet will buy one clarionet player," or, "three dollaire hire ze gran tuba." Heard, too, how, when days were dull, Giovanni had crawled wearily to his lonely pallet muttering disconsolately in grief-filled tones, "I have made only enough zees day to hire ze cymbal which cost ninety cent."

Think of the stern resolution that made Giovanni always face the goal, even when times were hard and cobbling scarce. Think of the privation, the weariness of brain and body, the apparent futility of the battle, but remember the lion-heartedness which made him tap his way along to conquest.

Shades of Conradi! Could you have looked down on Giovanni's funeral you must have turned away feeling your victory as short-lived as that which marked the early hours of battle when the Spartans fell at "dread Thermopylae's tryst." You must have regretted the haughty scorn you once heaped upon the unbusiness-like banana vendor on the opposite corner of Clark street.

The glories of that day linger yet like a beauteous sunset, but with considerable more display of color.

It became bruited about between the Monday of death and the Sunday of pageant, that no funeral since the days of the Roman emperors was to equal this—the passing of Giovanni. Following his carefully laid plans, as whispered in dying gasps, Vicente religiously—nay—ostentatiously—attended to the hiring of bands, the chartering of cabs, the notifi-

cation of patriotic, benevolent, and burial societies.

No hitch marred the grandeur of that parade. Wondering policemen stood on street corners with bated breath and amazedly watched the many miles of pedestrians and cabs unfold. The downtown sky-scrappers rocked with the noise and the weary cobblestones groaned 'neath the weight of that multitude. A rainbow maker would have stood aghast at the colors of the uniforms and sashes of the patriotic societies. An Indian prince would have swooned at the wealth of trapping, and the oldest emperor of Europe would have turned green with envy at the display of medals and orders.

Nine brass bands and four drum corps poom-poomed and ratty-te-tatted away throughout the many miles of march, while occupants of cabs littered the streets with remnants of luncheons. Did I say luncheons? No! Breakfasts, luncheons, and dinners, for twelve hours were required.

All did honor to Giovanni, and was it not his due, for this was the funeral of all funerals. Indeed, was it not an honor to ride in a prepaid cab in such a notable gathering, and was there not a more steadfast attention from the spectators on the street than would be accorded the chief magnate of the city.

So, for Giovanni ended the trials of life, the tragedies of love, and the years of desperate struggle to win. Some men achieve eminence while living, but others triumph only in death.

"But eet is good to beat," said my friend Vicente as he told me the story, "and do you not theenk, ma ver good fren," he concluded, "zat Giovan, as he r-r-r-ide and r-r-r-ride behind ze biga bands militaire an ze booteful processione, must hav been ver cheerful?"

# From the Viewpoint of Miss Jane

BY LEFA FIELD HUBBELL

Miss Jane Raymond was in her thirty-third year, and had never known a moment's discomfort or anxiety in her life. The dawn of her days broke in a rose-scented bath in a marble tub, and from golden candelabra rose-shaded lights burned dimly beside the sculptured ebony of her silken-draped couch at the close of her roseate days. Inherent, too, like the luxury-loving habit of her ways, she was instinct with that higher code of ethics which needs not to be coached, to obtain the semblance of which, in those of lesser breeding and meaner ancestry, requires years of teaching, and then remains untaught. She was a woman who placed people as she found them—and she tried to find something good in everybody—in the scale of civilization against people as custom and conventionality have distorted them. She went out of her way, not so much to be agreeable to other people as to make other people agreeable to her; knowing that, in her admiration for others lay her kindly feeling toward humanity, the feeling that enabled her to minister to many of humanity's ills. Her spirits were as the prism which catches and refracts the hues of the aurate twilight; they flashed brilliant signals of her naturally happy mood. Her every thought was a pearl of pleasure strung on the golden wire of a contented mind; her every action, that of grace and charity, the generous dews that fall from a heart surcharged with goodness. Goodness was her avatar and her seal.

But in Miss Jane's capacious heart there was something besides goodness; there was its counterpart, love. She loved everything beautiful; but more than all else, she loved her big, handsome brother, the dashing young lieutenant of the Tenth Infantry of Regulars, and she loved the major.

The major was a man of exceptional intellectual ability, in his way, with a great and flagrant admiration for the beautiful and good. Consequently, as he had frankly admitted, times innumerable, he

admired Miss Jane Raymond. As a correlative sequence, he also loved his profession of arms, alleging that in it alone was the rod which could make justice, like the fabled stream of rippling water, flow from the rock-bulwarked thrones of mighty nations.

"You think more of the clash of swords and the boom of cannons than you do of the peace and quiet of a happy home," she had complained, half-chidingly. They had been exchanging vague allusions to the advisability of making a happy home together. "I really believe you are looking forward to leaving me tomorrow for those horrid Philippines, with something like pleasure."

"My dear Miss Raymond," he had begun, loftily, by way of defence, and to make an impression upon her, "that is the difference between the lady and the soldier, between youth and age." He bowed with the grace of a courtier. "You see only the glitter and glory of jewels which, to the soldier, are as grains of sand to weigh him down; you see but the luxuriance of a mass of sombre foliage, while he thinks of its grateful shelter, or of its dessicated leaves which will make him a soft pillow for the night. To him, the birds' songs are but plaintive threnodies, unless trilled over a victorious battlefield; the lilt of the tossing spray, but the sea's dull moan of pain, unless the waves bear him, conqueror, upon the enemy's shore. You are fond of your orchids. Now," critically, "your orchids are beautiful, doubtless—"

"They are wonderful, exquisite!" she enthused, in swift defence. He had pierced her most vital spot.

"—But I don't care for flowers. I am a soldier." He drew himself up proudly. "I hear more music in the bugle's call than in the softest strains from a violin, and see more beauty in my battle standard than in your dainty orchids."

Now, one doesn't like to accuse a gentleman of prevaricating. But, the fact of the matter was, the major was very

## THE RED BOOK

fond of flowers. He was even passionately fond of them; indeed, for a man who had cast his life in the scale of fortune and war, to outweigh an unkind fate, he was ridiculously fond of them. They had a subtle message for him which seemed lost to grosser natures. He had been known to sit for hours with a fragrant blossom at his nostrils, and think, and dream, and marvel, like any sentimental swain. But he had been told—Miss Jane had herself informed him—that only in manly vigor and courage should she ever find the ideal she sought—an ideal which she had placed on a pedestal of her own making, built of the many votive offerings she had cast at the foot of her gilded shrine. And with his one object in life—that of surreptitiously usurping the pedestal and placing his own feet thereon—it would never do to admit such a weakness as an almost feminine love for flowers. Surely, this exalted ideal of her fancy was above such sentimental epicentres. She was only testing his manliness; she should never know.

Miss Jane's glance was one of impeachment mingled with commiseration. She toyed with the jeweled hoops on her slender fingers, while the major strutted in a lordly manner across the room and back.

"A man who doesn't care for music, or flowers, or poetry—" she began, but he interrupted her.

"Poetry!" he scoffed, contemptuously, much as a poet might say "Mush!" if suddenly asked his opinion upon such an utterly prosaic thing.

She was deeply pained. She turned away from her orchids as a mother turns away from a sleeping child, that the child may the better slumber in reposeful silence.

"I love my orchids, and my music, and my poetry," she said, on the verge of tears, "and you love your flag and your bugle calls. I love your flag and your bugle calls, too, for they are also mine; and I had hoped that you cared to make my pleasures yours as well."

The major winced and paled a little. He loved her too much to risk losing her in order to create an impression; but he could not recant now. He went near her and spoke humbly.

"Oh, Miss Jane! I am but a soldier; I have never had time to waste on such trivialities—" He checked himself as he remembered the long course he had taken in botany, wondering if her brother had ever mentioned it to her.

"Trivialities!" she flung back at him with more of impatience in her tone than he had ever heard before. "You can call such things trivialities!"

"You will teach me to appreciate their refining influence, their beauty—some day when—when you decide upon the thing I have so often intimated. In fact, Miss Jane," he added, drawing himself up to an impressive height, "I am leaving for the Philippines tomorrow, and I think you ought to put my mind at rest before I go."

"I think, major," she said, quite coldly, "that my answer will have to be, no. I—I could never marry a man who is not in sympathy with my sentiments."

"But I am," he began, lamely.

"No, you are not," she contradicted, irritably. "I would not marry a man who didn't love my orchids."

"But I do!" he protested, aghast.

"You don't," she insisted. "You love fighting, and blood, and savages, and—and other horrid things. Forget me—forget everything! I tell you, major, I wouldn't marry you, if you were the last man on earth," she cried, hysterically—a thing she had never done before. "A man who can see no beauty in a flower, could never see the sentiment in his wife's heart. A man without a fondness for flowers is almost as bad as a woman without love for children—there is something wrong somewhere."

"And you will let me go, where tropical fevers and awful diseases, starvation, earthquakes, and death in its every form, stare me in the face, without a word of encouragement from you? Remember—your brother is going, too. When he writes and tells you of the hardships and privations I am undergoing in behalf of my country and my profession, I shall expect, at least, a word of sympathy from you, if not encouragement; but I shall dare hope that it may be more than either of these—"

He was humble enough, but he could not move her.



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

"Miss Jane's glance was one of impeachment mingled with commiseration."

## THE RED BOOK

"It never will be," she declared, quite decisively. "Besides, I don't believe half the things I hear about the Philippines. You want to enlist my sympathies even before you go. When Willie can stand a place"—"Willie" was her great, broad-shouldered giant of a brother, with a voice of thunder and the stride of a grenadier—"it can't be so bad as people say. This will be his second trip to the Philippines, and I never heard him complain."

"And you never will," the major said quickly, loyally championing his friend. "But, you must remember, I am not so young as he."

"Yet there are times when you seem positively infantile," she retorted impatiently. She was rather angry with him for reminding her of the dangers he would have to encounter during his two years of exile.

But she would not relent. When he left, after a prolonged good bye, she was still obdurate.

"Willie," she said to her brother, the next morning, as she watched him gather a few dog-eared books together and stuff them in among his treasured belongings. "I have half a mind to go along with you. I have never been to the Philippines, you know."

Raymond looked up suddenly to see if she were serious. He knew what a creature of impulses she was.

"Banish any silly notion like that from your pretty head," he said. Then he laughed loud and boyishly at the mental picture he drew of Jane in the Philippines; it was too incongruous even to be clear.

"I don't see why," said she, plaintively. "I could guard you against cholera and dysentery by overlooking your household; and Simpson could give you many little comforts you would otherwise have to do without."

Raymond's mirth was almost boisterous. Miss Jane had never known him to laugh so heartily; it was almost pell-mell, the way that boy laughed, and all he said was: "My household! And Simpson as a ministering angel—in the Philippines!" Then he sobered, and added, more seriously, "Don't you ever

get an idea like that in your head, Jane. If I were to be stationed in Manila, it wouldn't be so bad; but even then I doubt if you could survive a month of it. All I ask is that you'll just be here when my two years are over, and not run off to Paris, or some place else, when it is time for me to come home. I'll be glad enough to get back—you can depend upon that."

All of which was the very best advice, but might have been so many bubbles let fall on Miss Jane's head, so far as any weight they had, or their power of penetration was concerned. When Miss Jane got a notion in her head that she wanted to do a thing, one might as well cease all protests against it. While she was, according to her brother, the sweetest and gentlest woman in the world, idolized as he was, yet even he could not turn her from a purpose.

Her purpose languished, though, for a good six months, during which time she tried to convince herself that she had not quite made up her mind; in reality, she was waiting for a letter which never came. If she could be distant and uncompassionate, so could others. It was manly and courageous not to weaken and relent because of a woman's whim.

One day, at the end of these long six months of waiting, she sat in her home in Washington, and cast a loving glance upon its exquisitely chiselled marbles, its antique bronzes, its rich ottomans and deep-carved massive furniture in their setting of fretted ceilings, panelled walls, and polished floors covered with the softest-textured, richest rugs. Then she removed her dainty gold-rimmed glasses from her patrician nose, and wiped something suspiciously moist from their lenses. Then she again took the letter from her lap, re-read the post-mark, "Mati, Mindanao, Philippines," and her eyes traveled down its pages to a certain passage which read:

*I simply will not listen to your coming. I have no mind to see my sister fade from her present glory of rosy cheeks and sparkling eyes, even for the pleasure of having her with me. And O, Jane, dear, you don't know what a pleasure I am denying myself in forbidding your coming! You have no idea*

what a happiness it would be to see a white woman's face again, down here where no white woman has ever been. For, guess what they have done with me! put me down in the furthest corner of Mindanao, to straighten out some constabulary matters. The constabulary here consists of ninety crude natives of many tribes—Monobos, Maguindanaos, Ma-Ranaos, Nindayas, Bogobos, and Tirurays. Some of the new recruits I have had to lasso and haul down out of trees, the only homes they have ever known. And I have had to bandage their feet for days before I could get them into the regulation army shoe; the great toe projects at a direct right-angle from the foot, which, without any exaggeration, is broader than it is long, and resembles nothing so much as a big prize ham, both in size and contour.

Miss Jane shuddered, and wriggled her little toes in their turquoise-velvet covering.

"That settles it," she exclaimed, rising, and placing the letter on a table. "I shall go. Poor little Willie! At least, I can bring him a little happiness—and it is my duty as a sister. There is no reason why I should be enjoying the luxuries of our home, when he is fighting for his country in the Philippines. Simpson!"

"Yessum."

"Pack my things—" She hesitated, wondering what she should require.

"For Paris, or London, or Rome?" Rome had been partially decided upon a week before.

"For the Philippines. Put in everything thin and cool and comfortable."

Simpson gasped, recovered, and altered the contents of several boxes, while Miss Jane fluttered around excitedly, putting aside little things to be packed and making mental comments upon her brother's lengthy letter.

"Poor Willie! I wonder what he means by 'hiking perpetually through the *bosque*,' and '*buscaring* Datto Ali,' and 'taking a *look-see* at the country,' and the Moros being '*listo*' and '*pillo*,' and all those other funny words? I do hope Willie isn't getting to use slang! Well, I shall soon know."

But she did not know quite so soon as she thought she would. After the long trans-Pacific journey, and its stop-overs at Honolulu and Japan and China, which consumed a good thirty days, she

was landed in Hongkong in the midst of the rainy season, when the fog which makes Londoners feel so much at home on the island was oppressive with its density and weight. After waiting there three days for transportation to Manila, three more days were consumed in crossing the China Sea, in the most disastrous typhoon of the season. In Manila she was met by a host of old army and navy friends whom she had known in Washington, and was compelled to wait there ten days for inter-island transportation to Mindanao. But those ten days were pleasant, crowded with invitations from friends who raved over her fresh face and "just-arrived-from-the-States" manner. There were drives on the Luneta, sight-seeing from the old wall, concerts by the military and constabulary bands, a hop at the Army and Navy Club, teas on the gun boats in the harbor, and many and varied other entertainments. Her only disagreeable experiences were her passage through the custom house and her visit to the bank. The cashier of the bank told her that authority had not yet reached them from Washington to furnish her with funds. Doubtless, it would come shortly; but madam must remember that the Philippines are different from any other place in the world, and the letters from one's banker that one uses elsewhere are not sufficient in the Orient. Madam must have patience. *Paciencia* is the shibboleth of the Far East, and truly must one practice it. But while Miss Jane was trying to be patient, the south-bound boat was ready to leave for Mindanao, and she and Simpson had to go aboard with just barely sufficient to take them to their destination.

"I shall expect to see you back in Manila by return of the next coast-guard," said the wife of the commanding general—that majestic, silver-haired woman of infinite grace and sweetness, who has done more than her share to bring sunlight into many hearts dark and aching with brooding nostalgia—as Miss Jane boarded the chartered transport. "You'll never be able to put up with conditions down there."

"Oh, I'll manage," was Miss Jane's hopeful reply.

After a terrible five days' journey, during which time she had been stuffed into a four-by-six state-room on the little chartered transport—formerly a Spanish gun boat, and still run according to Spanish methods—which seemed built only to accommodate the monstrous cockroaches and the millions of tiny red ants which assaulted her with evident intent to carry her off piece-meal; and Simpson had, in response to Miss Jane's shrieks of horror, killed two centipedes, one scorpion and a spider the size of a saucer; and she had been placed at table where she could see the slaughtering of a goat, a portion of which was served to her, later, as a choice delicacy; and Simpson had had to retire doubled up with cramps caused by over-indulgence in the water the boat carried for drinking purposes; and she had daily consumed a dinner of bread-soup, rice, greasy *comotes*, and several courses of bananas and mangoes, the *Formosa* pulled out of Davao harbor and left Mount Apo in the misty, topaz distance, rounded Point San Augustine, and plowed laboriously into the sapphire bay of Mati.

Mati contains one fair-sized building, built during the old *régime* to be used as the *comandancia*. It is now but a sad, battle-scarred and earthquake-shaken shack on the very verge of dissolution, and sits, in solitary dignity, high off the sandy ground, on stilts, and still serves as military headquarters, but for the American constabulary. There are also a *nipa*-thatched barracks, a tumbledown church, and three other small native grass buildings, including a Chinese *tienda* and a Spanish *bino*-shop.

All of the buildings Miss Jane could see from the upper deck of the boat, though the night was dark, and only one light, suspended from the tip of the flag-staff, glimmered dimly in the distance and served as a beacon to ships which upon rare occasions entered the harbor.

"It is rougher than I ever saw it in Mati Bay before," the quartermaster-agent of the little vessel remarked, as he saw Miss Jane leaning eagerly over the rail and straining her eyes to catch a glimpse of life on shore. "I doubt if

the lieutenant will send a boat out to meet us tonight."

Miss Jane turned upon him quickly and stabbed him with a glance of withering contempt—for she had at last succumbed to the irritating influence of the climate; she had not been seen to smile for two days.

"Lieutenant Raymond is my brother," she announced. "And I sent him a cablegram from Manila that I was coming; of course he will come out to-night!" She stamped her little foot on the floor of the deck. "Do you think a trifling rough sea in a sheltered bay could stop him?"

"I beg your pardon," the Q. M. A. returned apologetically. "But there is no cable this side of Cottabato. Your message is, most probably, in the mail-sack—that is the way they are brought to Mati and the east coast."

"What?" she gasped, in horror. "No cable?"

"Not even a telegraph wire this side of Cottabato. Your brother didn't know anything about the war between Russia and Japan until we came down last trip and told him."

Miss Jane was silent for a moment, thinking, while the Q. M. A. smiled—he had been in the Philippines five years; long enough to be able to smile again, or to have forgotten how.

"But if my brother did not get my message, he may not come out, as you say. Couldn't you send us ashore in your row-boat? I simply can't sleep another night on board this ship with my brother so near, and I not able to see and speak to him."

"Why, certainly, if you like," courteously returned the accommodating Q. M. A.

The ship's boat was lowered, and Miss Jane and Simpson, together with the mail-sack, the Q. M. A. and the crew, piled in. A moment later they were headed toward the shore. But the tide was low, and a jagged coral reef jutted out of the water some two hundred feet from the point of the old wharf, of which there now remain but a few straggling water-soaked and decaying piles. The reef effectually impeded their progress,



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

"Leaning eagerly over the rail to catch a glimpse of life on shore."

and one of the crew had to be sent to wade ashore and bring out a small *baroto*, into which Miss Jane and her appurtenances were placed to be pulled up on to the beach.

A constabulary soldier, a vicious-eyed Moro, red-fezzed and khaki-uniformed, was lazily pacing past the *comandancia* and stopped to halt the party in his pidgin-English; he called lustily, "Halt! Who go?"

"Friends," replied the Q. M. A.

"Advance, one frien', un' be reckoniz'."

The ship's officer advanced, was recognized, and returned to where the two women stood in the dark, wet from the salt spray, and shivering. It was the first time either of them had ever heard a real challenge in the night. There is something thrilling, terrible, about a first challenge, especially for a woman, and in the enemy's country. For Miss Jane it was positively appalling; she trembled with a new fear—a fear of something she could not name, of the dark, of the Moro sentinel, of the surging sea behind her and the grotesque trees by her side.

"Where is the *comandante*?" she heard the quartermaster-agent ask of the guard.

And she heard the guard reply: "In house; have got sick."

"Willie—ill!" she cried, and sprang frantically up the front steps.

The walls of the *comandancia* had originally been constructed of narrow strips of the *bijuco*-reed, tied together, about a half-inch apart, and then plastered over with a crude stucco. But a recent earthquake had disturbed the stucco, and great, glaring scars several feet across left spaces where one could see through the reed walls into the rooms within.

A small oil-lamp, with a grimy, broken chimney, casting an uncanny light from a flickering point of smoking, yellow flame, showed her the form of a man in khaki clothes and leather leggings lying on an army cot, apparently asleep.

"Willie!" cried Miss Jane, and she rushed into the room.

The figure on the cot sat bolt upright, with a start, and rubbed eyes that shone

with the light of wonder and incredulity. But the form was not that of Miss Jane's brother.

"Miss Raymond!" a voice exclaimed, huskily, as a man awakened from a sweet dream might pronounce a name if he suddenly perceived the loved object of his sleeping vision before him. "Miss Jane!"

"Major!" Miss Jane gasped—somehow, she did little else but gasp since coming to the Philippines—and fled.

But the major was in hot pursuit.

"Miss Jane!" he cried again, in an awful voice, which might have come from a demented man, and did come from one who thought he was. "What are you doing here? And Raymond not yet returned from Baganga!"

"Willie not here?" she shrieked hysterically. "I wrote him I would be here, from Washington, and then wired from Manila besides. He must have had my letter!"

"We don't get half our mail down here, especially our States' mail."

"Where is he?" she wailed, wringing her hands despairingly.

"Somewhere up around Baganga, on a hike. But don't worry. I'll rig up some place for you to stay until he gets back."

"When will he return?"

The major hesitated a moment, as if calculating, then replied: "Maybe not for ten days." He grasped her hand warmly, protectingly, while he told her how surprised and pleased he was to see her, and how he would make her as comfortable as possible, adding: "We get along famously, considering. Things aren't half so bad as they are painted, are they? One can't believe all one hears about the Philippines. Of course, it is to be expected that home going soldiers will exaggerate conditions over here, in order to impress the stay-at-homes with their heroism and enlist their sympathies." There was a sinister little smile in the corner of his mouth, but Miss Jane did not see it.

The place he "rigged up" for her with the aid of several *muchachos*, who appeared like evil genii from inconceivable nooks and crannies, rubbing sleepy

eyes and with a hang-dog, much-abused expression on their countenances as they scrutinized the two strange specimens of humanity, was certainly the source of all Miss Jane's nightmares for the remainder of her life.

"Oh, Simpson!" she cried, tearfully, "I wouldn't go to sleep in this house, with the walls all open that way, and frightful, slimy things crawling all over the floor, for anything!" And she insisted upon sitting on the edge of the bed with her feet drawn up under her all night.

The next morning Simpson awoke with the dawn. Miss Jane was still sitting on the edge of the bed, wide-eyed and spectre-like, and when she spoke her voice was hushed and despairing. There was a ghastly horror in her face that no words could describe.

Simpson rose, arranged her attire, and started on a tour of inspection of the premises, Miss Jane clinging fearfully to her skirts. The room they had slept in contained a cane-bottomed four-poster of Filipino pattern, with an army blanket thrown over it. There were, also, a high-backed, narrow, native cane chair, and a flag-draped box which held the only lamp in the house, and an enamelled tin basin, with a tomato-can half full of water beside it.

Miss Jane pulled her skirts about her with a grip that rivaled that of death, and cautiously followed Simpson out into the main room, which was the office. At least they judged so, since it contained two desks, a type-writer, and a stack of blank paper and envelopes; also, a calendar and several maps of the islands. There were four doors to this room, one on each side. The two side-doors opened into the bed-rooms—the major's and the one they had used; and the front door opened upon a veranda, while the back door led out upon a small bridge, roofed over with *nipa* palms, which connected the main portion of the building with a small *nipa* structure whose use the women could not determine. However, they went in.

In one corner stood a square box-like table, on top of which there was a layer

of dirt a foot thick. On top of the dirt there were several round, water-worn stones, jet-black with smoke, and between the stones were little piles of ashes and a number of charred pieces of wood. A ladle, made of a portion of a cocoanut-shell, was in a soot-blackened *olla* in which there was some dry, burnt rice, now swarming with tiny red ants. A *timba* of water stood in another corner, and beside it a box containing several cans of commissaries. Everything was reeking with soot; even the long, swinging cobwebs that hung from the black roof were thick and heavy with sooty scales.

"This must be the smoke-house," Miss Jane observed, shuddering. "I can't remember that Willie ever wrote anything about making hams—though I do recall his allusion to hams, in some way. I remember he said he shot a number of wild boars here."

Simpson went over and took a peep at the commissaries. There were two cans of tomatoes, a can of Spanish sausages, half a sack of dried beans, some bacon, a straw bag filled with burnt coffee, and some sticky brown sugar, besides a small half-pound can of butter marked "Australia."

They went back through the office and out upon the front veranda. To one side stood a table, and upon the table were two tin cups, two tin plates, and a small collection of pewter knives and forks and spoons.

Presently the major came strolling out. "Up so early?" he asked, surprised at seeing them there; it was little more than daylight. "Reveille has only just sounded. I thought you'd be tired out, and sleep late. I'll have Pedro prepare breakfast immediately." He disappeared for a moment.

When Miss Jane turned, she looked through the office and saw Pedro go into the "smoke-room" and stick a match into a queer little pile of wood which he had arranged loosely on top of the dirt-laden table in one corner. Then a second boy, wearing the same clothes she had observed the night before—and with the same spot of dirt on his chin, much as if he had not washed his face, appeared on the

veranda and nonchalantly wiped a dirty rag over the tin cups and plates, and arranged them, one at each end of the bare, wooden table. She looked away for a moment, and when she again mustered up courage to observe him, he was very carefully and with much deliberation placing a tin can of the brown sugar in the geometrical center of the table. Again the grimy cloth was produced, and the pewter knives and forks subjected to a cleansing.

Simpson could contain herself no longer.

"You filthy boy!" she exclaimed. "How can you use that frightful rag on those dishes?" for, by this time, she was quite convinced that the "dishes" were what the major and Lieutenant Raymond used. Her mind flew back to the white-tiled kitchen in Washington, with its nickel-plated gas-range, gleaming like polished silver, and the rows and rows of finest Sèvres and Haviland in the china closets.

The boy grinned. "Oh, no—I clean; other *muchachos* dirty. I take good *cuidado* my *trapo*." And he stuffed the cloth under discussion into his pants' pocket.

Simpson threw up her hands, and turned to her mistress, all her pent-up emotions expressed in the exclamation, "Miss Jane!"

"Simpson!" Miss Jane stammered. It was a great relief to her; it was the first word she had spoken since she had begun to comprehend. It was a dying prayer for breath and life.

When the major returned, he found her standing by the railing looking abstractedly at the flaming fire-trees that were in full bloom, a gorgeous mass of scarlet blossoms towering over the dried-grass roof of the barracks, a few hundred feet away. He walked up to her with a guilty, faltering stride; but if he had done, or was about to do, anything for which his conscience hurt him, she never suspected it.

"I don't know how to tell you," he began, looking down at the ground below them. "But you'll have to know about it presently—I may as well tell you now. I am here only on a tour of inspection,

and received orders in the mail last night to return immediately to Manila. That means I must leave on the *Formosa*."

"And leave us here—alone! Oh, Major!" Her face was pale, and she glanced at the little ship in the harbor with a look of positive appeal.

"Orders from headquarters—"

"But they don't know the circumstances—"

"There are no provisos in official orders; to ignore them means court-martial."

Miss Jane stumbled to the other end of the veranda and back again, thoughtfully, and with evident indecision.

"*Almuero*," announced the boy of the soiled tea-towel; and, as Miss Jane retraced her steps, she saw that the two tin cups were full to the brim of a black liquid into which another boy was pouring something thick and gray and gluey from a small can, marked "condensed milk."

"We'll talk more about it, after breakfast," the major said, leading her to a chair at one end of the table. "This is not what I should like to offer you, but it is the best we have. The boy will bring some bacon and hard-tack later."

With an air of desperate determination Miss Jane seated herself and bravely attempted to swallow a mouthful of the muddy liquid, vaguely wondering what it would be like without the "glue" in it.

The major watched her with secret admiration; nor did he smile when she said, in reply to his comment, that she was not relishing her coffee, "I never eat any breakfast, major. I don't particularly care for coffee."

Coffee! So that was what it was supposed to be!

Just then the boy brought the bacon—six slices of it swimming in a sea of grease.

A cobwebby handkerchief went up to Miss Jane's lips as she turned partially away. She half rose in her chair, pallid and perspiring.

"You are not ill?" the major asked, in deep concern, as he rose to catch her. She had swayed ominously to one side, but caught herself, clutching feebly at the back of her chair. "It is the change of climate. You are tired and over-wrought



DRAWN BY D. J. LAVIN

"Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?" Miss Jane wailed." See page 112

## THE RED BOOK

from your long journey. I don't see how I can leave you here this way—"

She writhed with mental agony. She spread her little white hands out helplessly and pitched forward toward him.

"You musn't leave me," she cried, the very essence of supplication in her voice. "You can't leave me, major, here in this awful place."

A crowd of natives had collected on the ground below to observe the two strange creatures that had come from over the seas. Black-toothed, *buyo*-chewing women in gaudy *patadiones* and with tiny tinkling bells dangling from beaded necklaces and anklets, stood in wide-eyed wonderment up-gazing, while men with octagonal-shaped wooden hats, inlaid with pearl and tortoise-shell and worn over red-and-yellow turbans, with skin-tight clothes of broad crimson, green, and magenta stripes, shifted from one tired foot to the other and back again, too absorbed with interest to heed the blazing sun.

To be left, defenseless, in the midst of such people, and not another American for miles around! Miss Jane recalled many things her brother had written her about them; they lived in houses up in giant trees, had been known to make human sacrifices, and to practice cannibalism! They ate devil-fish, and live locusts, and lizards, and whole nests of *pupa* bees! She had not believed it before, but one could tell it was so by looking at them. Indeed, it would be impossible to imagine their eating anything clean and civilized.

"I very much regret," the major was saying, "that you did not take your brother's advice about coming to the Philippines. You can see for yourself that your remaining here is entirely out of the question. There is but one thing to do—go back to Manila. There isn't a hotel this side of there fit for you to stay in until Raymond could reach you."

"But—but—major, I can't run off from Willie that way, after I came all this distance to see him, and then make him come to me! Besides, I—I haven't more than a little loose change in my purse. By some mistake, I was unable to get

funds from the bank in Manila. If you could—" she hesitated, her cheeks rivaling the hue of the flaming fire-tree. She had never asked a favor in her life, and as for borrowing money—she had never before known what that humiliation was.

It was the major's turn to become embarrassed. Truly, strange things happen in the Philippines.

"I would lend you some," he said quickly; "but, my dear Miss Raymond, I haven't had a pay-cheque for months. They are all awaiting me in Manila. I travel on government transportation you know, and give vouchers for everything I purchase for the government. I haven't—I don't believe I have ten *pesos* to my name with me."

"Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do?" Miss Jane wailed, pacing the veranda abstractedly. Finally she stopped at the end of the veranda in front of the major's window, and put her hands over her face and gave way to tears.

In a moment the major was by her side. He withdrew one of her trembling hands from her face, and held it closely within his own. Then he spoke—quite low, very tenderly.

"Miss Jane—"

She had heard him pronounce her name that way once before. A fire was suddenly rekindled in her heart, a fire not all of hope and relief. She knew what was coming; she knew what his solution to the problem would be. She turned slightly away, and her eyes traveled flutteringly—like a flight of slow-winged birds—and rested upon—upon—What was it? She gave a little shriek of delight, forgot all about her predicament, and that the major was on the verge of a proposal, and rushed to a box in the major's window. It was a commissary box, tagged simply, "Major T. F. Vining," but it contained the most exquisite collection of orchids and ferns she had ever seen.

"Orchids!" she cried, clapping her hands like an eager child; and her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled with the happiness of just seeing them. She looked up at the major with an adorable *moue* which exposed every dimple in her cheeks, and asked, ecstatically: "Where

*did you get them, and what do you intend to do with them?"*

What better cue could a love-lorn major ask? What better ally than those innocent little orchids? What more fitting opportunity to prove a life's devotion?

"I gathered them all for you. Who else? They were to be shipped to Washington by the first transport out of Manila."

"But they were selected by an expert. Don't tell me that a man who doesn't know the difference between a cowslip and a harebell—and any man who doesn't love flowers would—could make such a collection as this."

The major stammered an explanation that had trembled in his heart since their night of parting, and added: "I intended to write and tell you when I sent the orchids, and put the question to you that I have just asked and which you have not yet answered."

"Why! You haven't said a word about it!" she exclaimed. "And besides, if I were to say 'yes' you'd think it was in self-defense—just because you happened to tell me once, long ago, that an officer could take his—his wife with him on government transportation. You'd think I only accepted to get away," she declared; but there was a happy note that rang true in spite of her false pretenses.

"No, I wouldn't"—swiftly, hopefully, eagerly. "I'd think it was because you want to."

"I do." Her assurance was as swift as his contradiction. "I do, major."

Simpson's back was turned discreetly towards them; and, as the major afterward said, "What do Moros know, anyway? They don't know the difference between a caress or chastisement."

"But what about Raymond?" he suggested, in the midst of his happiness.

"I'll leave a note for him. He had no business to run away. He can come up to Manila if he wants to see his sister."

The major hesitated a moment before making any comment, as if to make quite sure he was safe in doing so; then he confessed his whole nefarious plot.

"You won't need to; he'll be back today. I returned a day sooner than he, because he had to stop over, about twelve miles up the coast, to bring a prisoner down, and he had to wait until the prisoner was brought in from the hills. I came in yesterday, about five o'clock, and lay down to rest, and had not wakened yet when you came. We had been hiking for thirty-eight hours, and I was tired out." He watched her face, then added as a last thrust: "Raymond is ordered back to Manila with me."

"Then he won't have to stay here, after all?" She threw her shoulders back with a threatening little shrug, and flashed him a glance of menace; but as the major only smiled beseechingly, she pretended to be angry for a moment, then went to the rail and stared down upon the beturbaned heads with a smile of comprehension.

# The Governor-General of the Ginger Group

BY WILBUR D. NESBIT

It makes no difference what sort of villainy you are engaged in, whether it be harmless or otherwise, one John Henry Nemesis is camping on your trail and he is going to come stampeding into your camp almost any morning. Whether your particular piece of craftiness be love or business, you may put an N. B. against the footnote that J. H. Nemesis, professional avenger and dealer in just deserts at retail and wholesale, has his eye on you.

These sage reflections are suggested by the meteoric career of Oscar B. Higberry, erstwhile Governor-General of the Ginger Group and at present a citizen of parts unknown. A crumpled atlas, a jealous rival, and his own over-reaching ambition combined to invite the concussion which occurred in the region of his cervical vertebrae at the moment when he thought he was on the pinnacle of success bowing to encores.

Oscar B. Higberry had been by turns real estate agent, book agent, lightning rod agent, oil well promoter, and editor, and had concluded that one who was raised a pet should never soil his hands by plebeian toil. Had money grown on trees, he would have induced some confiding stranger to pick it for him, and would have compelled the stranger to pluck it from the side of the tree which was not furnishing shade for him at the moment.

That he and Granville Stodworthy were brother editors of the *Green Center Gazette* and were also firm rivals for the hand and affections of Miss Grace Fillingham seemed to him no reason why he should avoid discussing the future with Stodworthy. Higberry never discussed the past. He forgot it, and expected you to do the same. As to the present, it was getting away too rapidly to merit much consideration from him. It was the future—his future—that got his best thought and study. What to do and whom to do tomorrow were his first and second thoughts, and usually they were provocative of tangible results.

He had been an editor two weeks, having matched his experience against Stodworthy's money, when the endless routine palled upon him. There was not enough excitement about the life. In Green Center it was almost impossible to find out anything which could be printed in such style as to compel the man written up to come in and argue with, or even fight, the editor. The only fight they had to record was one in which Stodworthy had been the lucky man. Higberry arrived on the scene after Stodworthy had contracted a black eye and the irate subscriber had hurried home to tell the folks about the sanguinary contest. It is always a sanguinary contest to the man who wins; to the other fellow it is a brutal, uncalled-for attack.

"Odd how women admire a fighter," Higberry said.

Stodworthy gloomily poked his pen to the bottom of the inkwell and fished out a scrap of blotting paper.

"Specially," Higberry went on, "if he wins, or if he loses. A woman would just as soon sympathize as admire. Ever notice that?"

"Can't say that I have," Stodworthy replied.

"Well, if I'd had your advantages, I'd been taking notice. I only wish I'd had the chance you've had with Miss Fillingham. Bet you I'd have made her think that black eye was garnered in her defense. Why, I," he straightened up and patted the table with the flat of his hand, "would have played that black eye so strong she would have wanted me to have a black eye all my life. Stod., you're dead slow."

Stodworthy glared gloomily at him.

"You're dead slow," Higberry asserted. "You're dead slow; this town's dead slow, and if I stay here I'll be dead slow. I'm going to move on."

The edge of a smile found its way into the mingled sienna and ultramarine blue of Stodworthy's cheek. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm going to get a government job."  
"Civil service?"

"Not on your confiding disposition! Nay, nay, my cheerful gazelle! Me for the large fat jobs that go to the favored few and come to you because you see them before the next man knows they exist."

"But what about the paper?"

"I take a six months' vacation, and you run the paper, and when I come back I'll continue to assume my share of the debts. That's fair. If I don't make good in six months—if I don't show you the good, hard cash to settle all the debts and put the paper in good selling condition, then I'll let you go away for six months, and when you come back I'll guarantee an assortment of liabilities seldom equalled and never excelled."

The only alluring feature of the proposition to Stodworthy was that Higberry, his rival, would be out of the running for half a year. This thought even made his injured eye cease throbbing for the moment. He agreed to the proposition. Had he hesitated, Higberry would have gone right on arguing until he agreed.

Next morning Stodworthy found on his desk a penciled note of farewell from Higberry. Also, on the floor near Higberry's desk he found an atlas map of the world on Mercator's projection. It had pencil marks and dots

all about New Zealand and the adjacent waters. He threw it in the waste basket, thinking nothing of it at the time. Stodworthy idly wondered where Higberry had gone, but from that musing he turned his mind to Miss Fillingham. Stodworthy could think of but one thing at once; Higberry had the faculty of keeping his mind on as many things as he wanted to. For the next two months Stodworthy let the paper gather more debt while he endeavored to



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

\* There was a fine half-tone picture of Higberry.\* See page 117

convince Miss Fillingham that Higberry had no right to ask her to promise not to forget him.

It was three months after Higberry left that Stodworthy picked up a Chicago paper and read some headlines that made him start. They announced:

"New Islands Discovered! Oscar B. Higberry Finds Hitherto Unknown Group in the Pacific. He Raises the American Flag and Adds Them to Our Possessions. Natives Accept Jurisdiction of United States Willingly. Great

Trade Future. Higberry's Interesting Account of the Ginger Group."

Then followed two columns of vivid description of how Higberry, while cruising on his pleasure yacht off the coast of New Zealand, whither he had gone to study the system of government, had been blown hundreds of miles out of the track of regular travel, and had come upon a small group of islands, which because of their isolation had never before been visited by white men. Indeed, they were not even noted on any charts. Because



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"He found Stodworthy cold, calm, impassive and critical." See page 117

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE GINGER GROUP 117

the principal product of the islands was, or could be made, ginger, Higberry had conferred upon them the name of "Ginger Group," and had raised a small American flag and had taken possession of them for this government.

There was a fine half tone picture of Higberry, also a three-column pen and ink illustration, showing Higberry nailing the flag to a palm tree before the palace of the king of the islands, with the king and his numerous queens, as well as his standing army and a group of his subjects, salaaming. There was an interview with Higberry, in which he modestly (for him) gave a brief account of his adventures and a glowing account of the islands. He dwelt especially upon the great possibilities for commercial development of this virgin soil.

"Why," he explained in his interview, "the Gingerrotes"—this was the name he had given the tribe inhabiting the group—"haven't the slightest idea in the world about money. They don't even have any medium of exchange. Their manner of life is ideal. Each takes what he wants wherever he finds it, and, nobody knowing anything of any other manner of life, nobody makes any objection. Of course, it is our duty to take this benighted people by the hand and lead them into a higher and nobler walk of life. On my own initiative I have taken the first step toward civilizing them by raising above them that grand old banner whose shade gives protection to all beneath it."

There was much more of a patriotic and humanitarian nature in the interview, and once, just once, Higberry had let fall a statement to the effect that this government should lose no time in appointing a capable, earnest man to go to the Ginger Group and take over the reins of government there. This sentence had effect.

Next day there were lengthy editorials commenting upon Higberry's addition to the knowledge of the world and what is on it, and suggesting that he, as the discoverer and adopter of the Ginger Group, should be nominated and confirmed as its Governor-General.

When Oscar B. Higberry reached Green Center, about a week after the announcement of his discovery, the Green

Center Band and all the prominent citizens of Green Center, except Granville Stodworthy, met him at the station. He rode to the hotel in a *décolleté* cab and bowed right and left with a modest, deprecatory bow which won the hearts of all. It was noticed that Miss Grace Fillingham, who formed one of a group of girls on the veranda of her father's residence, blushed vividly when Oscar B. Higberry arose in his carriage and made the deepest bow of his triumphal procession toward her. At the hotel there were more speeches of welcome, followed by a luncheon at which there were still more laudatory speeches. Higberry bore his honors easily. Of the Ginger Group he did not talk definitely.

"Terrah-torial acquisition," and "inevitable des-tiny" were two phrases that he used often, with resonant effect. Oscar B. Higberry had already gone so far along the path of statecraft that he could hyphenate his long words without stopping to think where the syllables began and ended.

Late in the evening Higberry managed to escape the adulating throng and made his way to the *Gazette* office. There he found Stodworthy, cold, calm, impassive, and critical. Stodworthy shook him by the hand, inquired how he did, and then asked:

"Have you been away?"

"Been away? Why, man, surely you have read—"

"Of course I have read the papers. But, look here, Higberry, where is this Ginger Group?"

Higberry looked at him for a full minute. Then he extracted a nice, fat cigar from his vest pocket, pinched the end off, lighted the cigar, lifted his feet to the editorial desk and blew a cloud of smoke to the ceiling.

"Where is the Ginger Group?" he echoed. "I cannot give you the precise figures, but I should say, on a rough guess, that the Ginger Group is somewhere in the south Pacific ocean, at about 140 west longitude and 35 south latitude."

"Right down here below Polynesia?" asked Stodworthy, turning to a wall map of the hemispheres.

"Exactly."

"But there is no land indicated on the map at that part of the world."

"You will have to wait until the maps are re-made. Then you'll find the Ginger Group properly shown."

"Higberry, I don't believe there is any Ginger Group."

"Why don't you say so in the paper?"

"Well, because—"

"Because if you do you will be opposing the confident belief of everybody in Green Center and elsewhere, including—don't forget this—including Miss Grace Fillingham."

"That has nothing to do with my opinion. Can't a man come to conclusions of his own?"

"He can, but not where there is a girl concerned. Now, Stod., let's get at the gist of this. You are jealous and envious of me, aren't you? Yes, you are though. You thought you would have the best of it when you accepted my proposition to leave the paper in your hands. Now, I don't care how many debts you have contracted, I stick to my promise to shoulder half of them when the time comes. But, as I own half the paper, you've got to support me. I'm going to be Governor-General of the Ginger Group, but that isn't all. Man, there's nothing that can't be done there—trolley lines, paper mills, railroads, newspapers—don't you see? Those natives—"

"If they exist," interrupted Stodworthy.

"—those natives, as I was saying, know absolutely nothing of the world. They're as ignorant of outside affairs as Adam was in the garden of Eden. What we've got to do is to teach them what money is, get them to earn money, and then get the money from them. That's civilization. If you like, you can be Lieutenant Governor-General, also vice-president in the different corporations I'm going to organize to develop the Ginger Group. By the way, I'll place an order with you right now for some job printing. We'll want about forty thousand prospectuses and some shares and bonds of The Ginger Group Development Company. I ought to get on the market within a week."

"I don't want any office, either in your government or in your companies."

"All right. There's others. Do you want to do the printing?"

"I can't refuse that, as this is partly your own plant."

"I just wondered."

Higberry took his feet down, drew pen, ink, and paper to him, and prepared the prospectus of the Ginger Group Development Company. Also he drafted the form of the shares of stock and the bonds, which were to be secured by first mortgage on the company's lands, sites, and rights of way in the Ginger Group.

"But look, Higberry," argued Stodworthy, glancing over the copy, "what if you are not made Governor-General?"

"My dear, benighted fellow citizen and brother laborer, if I push things through so that I am at the head of everything else, what good will it do any other man to be Governor-General?"

Higberry sat in the office, after Stodworthy had left, until late in the night, smoking many cigars and studying carefully a map of the south Pacific ocean, which he took from his pocketbook. From time to time he would nod, again he would chuckle; then he would figure hurriedly on some paper on the desk, following this by smiling to himself. At last he put away his map, tore up the sheets of paper on which he had figured, lit a fresh cigar, turned out the lights and left the office, murmuring to himself:

"Governor-General? I guess yes! And then some!"

Returning to the hotel, he sought his room and slept the sleep of the just.

Miss Grace Fillingham said "No" to Granville Stodworthy. She said it kindly, but none the less firmly. She also said it with that shade of weariness which comes into the tones of one who has been compelled to repeat a statement many times.

"This is final?" Stodworthy asked, rising to find his hat, which was in his hand all the time.

"It is, Mr. Stodworthy. I really hate to pain you, but you can see—"

"O, anybody can see," Stodworthy sourly interrupted. "Anybody can see! I suppose if I had gone away and then had come back and claimed to have found the Ginger Group or the Allspice Archi-

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE GINGER GROUP 119

pelago or the Citron Community you might have been in a mood to regard me with more favor."

"Why, Mr. Stodworthy! I never supposed you would permit your jealousy to show in such a rude manner."

"How did you think a man would exhibit his jealousy? Think I would hire a string band and come around here about midnight and sing soft songs about how badly I feel? I tell you, Grace, you—"

"Miss Fillingham, if you please."

"Miss Fillingham, then. I was going to say, I tell you, if you are permitting yourself to be blinded by the claims of this man Higberry, who is nothing but a mere adventurer—"

"Why, how can you say such things? He is your business partner."

"In the *Gazette*, yes. Not in the Ginger Group—if there is any Ginger Group."

"But why shouldn't there be a Ginger Group? Aren't people all the time discovering new islands and chemicals and—things?"

"O, yes, but the idea of a lot of islands where ginger can be raised away down there near New Zealand! Why, anybody who knows anything knows that ginger is only produced in the tropics."

"But Mr. Higberry says that the Ginger Group is in a sort of atmospherical and oceanic pocket formed by the southerly trade winds and the warm currents and that really the climate is equable and salubrious the year round, lending to the islands a delightfully—"

"My dear Miss Fillingham! I read all that in the proofs of Higberry's prospectus. If you can do no better than repeat his balderdash to me I shall bid you adieu."

"Indeed, it is not balderdash, Mr. Granville Stodworthy, and I will thank you to be more careful in your comments on my friends."

Stodworthy made what apologies he could and stalked forth into the night. His way to the office led him past the hotel. It irked him sore to see Higberry hobnobbing in the office with the congressman from that district. It was evident that Higberry was after that Governor-Generalship. There was only one phase of the whole affair that did not displease him. The manifold demands of

his enterprise took up so much of Higberry's time that he had few chances to call on Miss Fillingham. And it seemed that while he was with her he talked nothing but Ginger Group.

There was no questioning the fact that Higberry's reported find had caused a tremendous sensation. Already the mat-



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"The matter had worked its way into politics."

ter had worked its way into politics. One party wanted nothing whatever to do with the islands of the Ginger Group. Let the brown man shoulder their own burdens, said this one party. If they wanted to be civilized, now that they were discovered, let them go ahead and civilize themselves, and not tax the United States

## THE RED BOOK

for the work. On the other hand, the other party was rabidly in favor of taking over the Ginger Group, lock, stock, and barrel, of making the inhabitants civilized citizens by brevet, and of bringing them immediately into the full enjoyment of such blessings as could be sent to them by freight steamers. Anyhow, it was argued, Higberry, by finding the islands, raising the flag and claiming them for this country, had placed us under a moral obligation that could not be shirked, and which must be assumed, whether or no. We should have to handle the matter as best we could and settle the right or wrong of it when we got time. Who, therefore, should be Governor-General? Well, who? All argument simmered down to Oscar B. Higberry. Higberry had organized his Ginger Group Development Company and the stock was already at par. Subsidiary companies which would take up the various phases of industrial growth had been formed and their stock also was eagerly purchased.

Higberry really was not pressing the matter of being appointed to the high official position for which he was mentioned. He was busy enough with the purely commercial features of the affair.

From comparative obscurity in Green Center he had leaped to the greatest prominence and he had to wear a silk hat and frock coat every day. He was besieged for his picture and for interviews; magazines wanted articles from his pen; autograph seekers made life miserable for him and investors simply gave him no rest. In it all there was but one discordant note, and that was the pessimistic voice of Granville Stodworthy. But everybody knew what was wrong with Stodworthy, and he lost friends by his course. Stodworthy was always arguing with all who would listen to him. He would pull out the map of the South Pacific Ocean, jab his finger on the spot where Higberry claimed to have bumped into the Ginger Group and ask:

"See any indications of land there? It's water—plain old ocean water. You needn't tell me!"

Whereat the others would say:

"Why, that just proves it! Don't you see? Mr. Higberry says the islands are

where nobody ever thought there was anything but water. You needn't tell us!"

Higberry one evening found an opportunity to call on Miss Fillingham, and of course the Ginger Group became at once the topic of conversation. Higberry told her for about the hundredth time all about his perilous landing on the shores, of his hospitable reception by the natives, and of how he had stood on the sands and dreamed of empire.

"Miss Fillingham—Grace," he sighed, taking her unresisting hand.

"Mr. Higberry," she whispered.

"Call me Oscar."

"Oh, I couldn't—yet. Think! I should really begin calling you Governor-General."

"And when that comes to pass, there will have to be a Governor-Generalless, Grace."

She blushed and hung her head.

"But," Higberry went on, tenderly, "I often think how much happier I would be to settle down here in our own country, rather than go afar to this unknown territory, and—"

"But you said you had heard the call of duty and that you could not be deaf to it."

"I know I did, but that was in one of those prospectuses. You know, I had to make a lot of people hear that call of duty, too."

"But tell me, Mr. Higberry—well, Oscar, if you really want me to call you so—tell me, have you heard anything from the Ginger Group since you left there?"

"Not a word. Of course, you know, there is no mail service or cable line or any way of communicating."

"Then that's why Mr. Stodworthy has—I forgot!"

"You forgot what?" Higberry had dropped her hand and was on the alert.

"He told me it was a secret."

"Grace, there should be no secrets between us."

"Well, he told me that some of the investors had had a ship sent out from New Zealand to survey the Ginger Group."

Higberry went white and red and green. He pulled at his collar as if it were too tight for him.

## GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE GINGER GROUP 121

"When'd he tell you this?"

"Only a week ago."

"The scoundrel!"

"Then it isn't true, is it, Mr. Hig—Oscar—what he says—that there is no Ginger Group at all?"

"True? My dear girl! Don't you suppose that with all these companies organized and all that stock sold—don't you suppose that there simply has got to be a Ginger Group?"

She thought that sounded plausible, and

seeing that this line of conversation made Oscar uneasy she changed the subject. But she was unsuccessful in her efforts to keep him off the Ginger Group for more than a few sentences at a time. But before Highberry left that evening he pressed her to name a day for a certain happy event. To this she demurred.

"Wait until you are Governor-General," she said. "It would be such a lovely trip, wouldn't it? And so new! Just think, no bridal couple ever went to



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"Why, that just proves it! Don't you see?"

## THE RED BOOK

that part of the world on their honeymoon, did they?"

He rather ungraciously agreed to the delay; so ungraciously, in fact, that she would not even say, "Yes." She told him that all hinged upon his becoming Governor-General. This brought from him a criticism of her mercenary and material outlook upon the world; and she retaliated by showing him that so far he had been working the material end of the Ginger Group far more than the great and noble projects he had at first outlined. In truth, they had a genuine lovers' quarrel and parted in about as much sorrow as anger.

But in the bosom of Oscar B. Higberry there had been placed one large, lively doubt. And that doubt was of himself.

## IS THERE A GINGER GROUP?

In big black type, this line stretched across the first page of the *Green Center Gazette*.

Stodworthy had declared open war on his partner, and he followed up his ten inch shell of headline with a withering swirl of grapeshot composed of facts, figures, maps, records, and statistics. Nemesis had gone on the warpath.

But, to everybody except Granville Stodworthy and Oscar B. Higberry, the question might as well have been: "Is there a North America?" The Ginger Group had been accepted as an entity. People had put their money in it, and it had been thrown into politics. When anything gets into political discussions it must exist. However, Stodworthy succeeded in arousing some excitement—particularly in the mind of Higberry. He came post haste to the *Gazette* office, a copy of the offending paper clutched in his hand, and opened the vials of his wrath upon the head of Stodworthy. The latter stood by his guns.

"It's as much my paper as it is yours, and besides, you have put it in my charge for the present. I can only print what appeals to me as being plausible and true."

"I'll get an injunction," asserted Higberry.

"Do. That'll be an acknowledgement that I'm in the right. Look here, Higberry, if there really is a Ginger

Group, why don't you prove it?"

"Prove it? Prove it? Why, you chuckle-head, do you think I can load those islands in a boat and ship them here, and carry them around for inspection?"

"No. But all you have done is get after the money. You haven't suggested a surveying expedition or—"

Higberry snorted.

"No. But you have, haven't you? You're the man that caused an expedition to be sent out from New Zealand, to try to make me out a liar, aren't you? Nice sort of a business associate you are!"

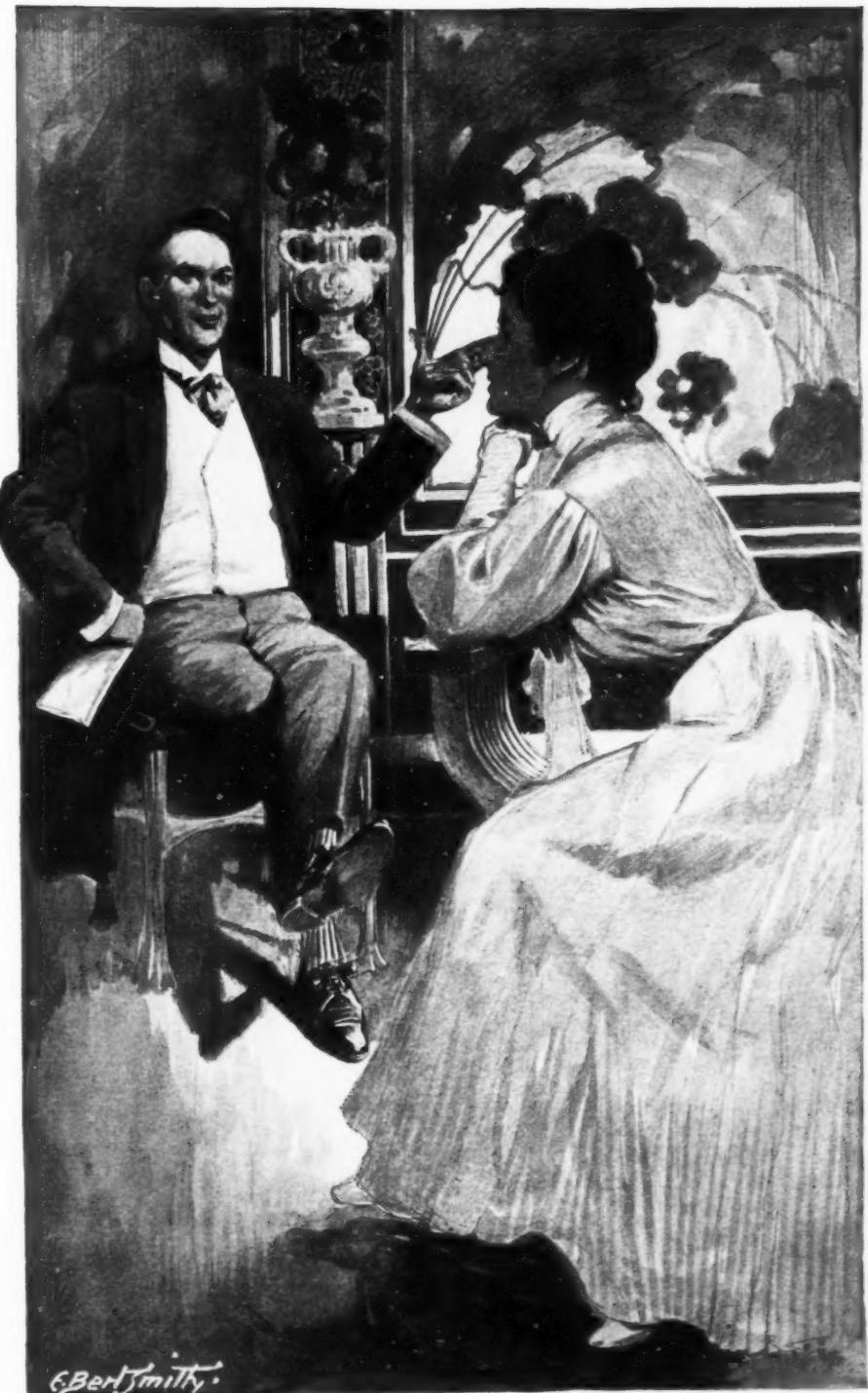
"I'd like to know how you found that out."

"O, these things are hard to keep quiet."

It really was unkind of Stodworthy to break into print with his suspicions just at this time. Higberry had succeeded in being interviewed and in writing articles and otherwise working the public up to a high pitch of enthusiasm over himself and the Ginger Group. Congressman Whiffles was heart and soul in favor of having Higberry made Governor-General, with a salary commensurate to his position and a good, healthy appropriation for public expenses. The shares and bonds of the different companies were only beginning to move up in value. Higberry had disposed of a great many of them, but it cost money to keep the public interest at the top pitch. And now came Stodworthy with his dampening: "Is There a Ginger Group?"

Now, where there is a woman in the case—and there are very few cases which lack women—the man is prone to think that she is the salient feature. So with the Ginger Group dispute. Higberry almost forgot the group, the stocks, the bonds, the offices, and all else. After all, his first object to be achieved was the hand of Miss Fillingham. For that he had found the Ginger Group, for that he had aspired to high position and honor, for that he had dreamed of wealth and worked for it, too. But the Fillingham family took the *Gazette*, and Grace could read the headlines as well as anybody else could.

It is a peculiar fact that those whose good opinion we want are those who insist most upon our deserving it. They are the first to hearken to the still small



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"My dear girl, there simply has got to be a Ginger Group."

## THE RED BOOK

voice of detraction. They are the first who want us to explain. Those who care nothing for us never ask us to explain; they simply say we cannot explain, and go ahead believing the bad about us as hard as they can. Had Higberry been less demonstrative in his efforts to win Miss Fillingham; had he refrained from hanging his banners on the outer walls and notifying Stodworthy that there was to be a fight, then he might have conducted his Ginger Group campaign without so much interference.

Let us see his position at this stage of the proceedings: A ship was somewhere on the briny deep, seeking the Ginger Group. Stodworthy was opposing him by bald statement and by innuendo. The congressman was hedging. The investors were growing few. And Miss Fillingham, with that sweet ingenuousness of women, was asking him why, if what people were saying was not true, he did not at once disprove it. In vain did Higberry cite the fact that he was calling folks liars as rapidly as possible. She refused to give him the affirmative answer to the question he had put so often. There was one little balm of Gilead for him: she simply had no use for that mean Mr. Stodworthy!

The weeks went by and Higberry waxed nervous. Stodworthy did, also. The ship that had gone on the voyage of investigation had not yet reported. It was overdue.

"It has found the Ginger Group, and the captain and crew are being entertained," declared Higberry.

"It is still searching for the Ginger Group," retorted Stodworthy.

The public oscillated between the two opinions. Other papers began referring to Higberry's "alleged claims." Circumstances were growing parlous. At last the tension snapped. One day there came two cablegrams. The first read:

The ship Hawkeye has returned from an unsuccessful cruise in search of the Ginger Group

Stodworthy had the grace to show this cablegram to Higberry before printing it. We may never know whether it was a feeling of guilt or of pique that impelled Oscar B. Higberry to pack his grip, to withdraw his bank balance, and to fade from the scene with unbecoming suddenness. If it were not for the second cablegram, which came that same afternoon, we should have our doubts about Higberry. The second message was:

The Southern Pacific Ocean has been the scene of terrific volcanic and seismic disturbances within the past fortnight. Many small islands have been submerged and new ones have arisen. The survey ship Hawkeye reports that latitude south 35, longitude west 140 is a calm expanse of water. This was the reported location of the Ginger Group of islands.

Since then there have been two investigating committees and one surveying committee sent to the south seas. Congressman Whiffles was a member of the second investigating committee, which gathered evidence which should justify the government in withdrawing the appropriation it had made for the installation of civil administration in the Ginger Group.

As an instance of the back-handed slaps sometimes administered by Nemesis we must add that Granville Stodworthy, editor of the *Green Center Gazette*, in the course of his duty had to write the following item:

Married—At the home of the bride's parents, Miss Grace Euphemia Fillingham to the Hon. Robert Miggie Whiffles. The happy couple sailed Tuesday with the congressional committee which goes to the south seas to inspect the late site of the islands known as the Ginger Group.

Vague rumors of a white man who is head of a republic in the wilds of Thibet, and who is obstinate in his refusal to permit explorers to enter his country, have recalled the events narrated above. It is just possible that the ambition of Oscar B. Higberry is vaulting again and that he is taking precautions to avoid running against anything.



FROM  
MAISON  
LAFERRIERE

PARISIAN MODES  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT  
REUTLINGER  
PARIS

Shoulder cape of  
olive green taffeta  
with straps of red,  
embroidered with  
gold and finished  
with fringe



FROM  
MAISON  
NEY SOEURS

**PARISIAN MODES**  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT  
REUTLINGER  
PARIS

Afternoon gown  
of white mousseuse  
de soie, trimmed  
with flowers and  
insertion of Irish  
point lace



FROM

MAISON

PAQUIN

**PARISIAN MODES**  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT  
REUTLINGER  
PARIS

Evening gown of  
black mouseline de  
soie made over  
orange mouseline,  
wide flounce of  
black velvet,  
corsage and skirt  
trimmings of gold  
embroidery



FROM

MAISON

DAILY

**PARISIAN MODES**  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT  
REUTLINGER  
PARIS

Afternoon gown  
of Nile green voile,  
trimmed with  
braids of surah  
of the same  
shade



FROM  
MAISON  
NEY SOEURS

PARISIAN MODES  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT  
REUTLINGER  
PARIS

Street dress of  
white broadcloth,  
corsage trimmed  
with sapphire-  
blue striped  
satin



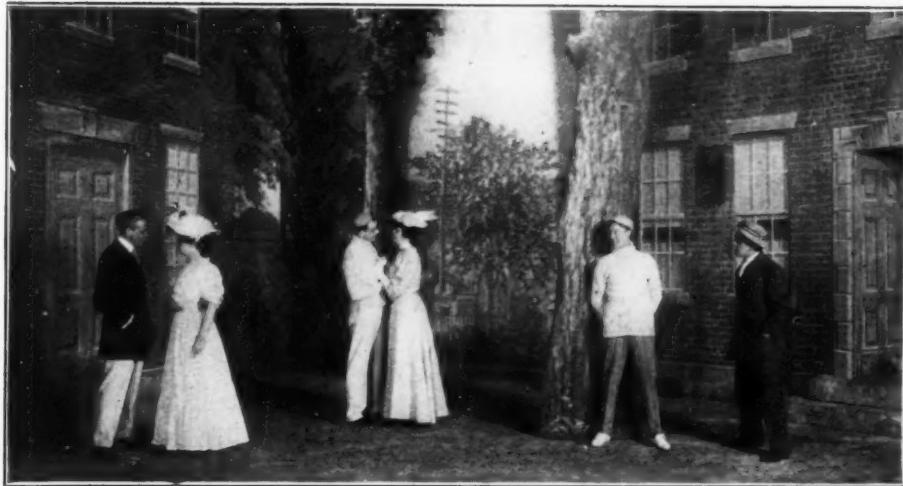
FROM

MAISON

BERNARD

**PARISIAN MODES**  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT  
REUTLINGER  
PARIS

Driving gown of silk  
and linen in blue  
and white stripes;  
skirt trimmed with  
ruching, bolero  
corsage of sky blue  
taffeta



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALLEN, NEW YORK

Scene from "Brown of Harvard."

## Some Dramas of the Day

BY ACTON DAVIES

The past four weeks have been propitious ones for the aspiring young American dramatists. Of nine new productions, seven have come from the pens of native authors, only one of whom, Augustus Thomas, the author of "The Embassy Ball," has already established a reputation. While none of these new plays has scored what might be called a really scintillating success, several of them have attained a large degree of popularity, and it is quite probable that two and perhaps more of them may succeed in weathering out the season on a Broadway stage.

After twenty-seven years spent in active service on the stage, Harry Woodruff has at last bloomed forth as a star at the Princess Theatre. Considering the fact that he is still playing leading juvenile rôles, the length of his career may seem rather astonishing to some of his admirers, but it must be remembered he started out almost as an infant phenomenon. His new play is entitled "Brown at Harvard," and when I say that it is a college play written by a woman, Miss Rita Johnston Young, I am giving a very fair idea of the plot. It is a picture of college life entirely rose colored, and tinted from a woman's point of view. College men

may find a great deal to smile at in some of the situations, but for all of that, its sentimentality and enthusiasm have made it such a strong card to women theatre-goers that the management have been obliged to give three matinee performances a week. Considering the smallness of the stage, the outdoor effects which Henry Miller in his new capacity of stage manager succeeded in achieving, were quite remarkable. These same stage effects and the breezy, jaunty work of half a dozen of the young men in the company who were cast to play college boys, have made the play a success.

When the play was first produced the conventional Wronged Lady was permitted to occupy far too much of the plot. In melodrama of a cheaper brand you accept this young person, with her black gown and accumulated sorrows, as one of the regular ingredients of the pudding, as it were, but, in a play which bases its whole claim to popularity on youth, sport and a thousand and one glamors of early boyhood, the sight of this one poor, fallen little Eve in Harvard's Adamful Eden jarred the nerves considerably. Both Mr. Miller and the authoress were quick to realize this point after the first perform-



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALLEN NEW YORK

Scene from "Brown of Harvard."



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALLEN, NEW YORK

Henry Woodruff and Miss Laura Hope Crews  
in "Brown of Harvard."

ance. A few rehearsals and a blue pencil, heroically manipulated, quickly set this matter right. The injured lady is now so far in the background you can scarcely hear the rustle of her skirts.

*Brown*, the hero, has, as is nearly always the case in college plays written by women, a capacity for bearing other people's burdens which is almost scriptural in its scope. For two acts he heroically shields the younger brother of his sweetheart from all manner of crimes, from forgery to abduction, and it isn't until the day of the boat race that *Brown* is really to show himself in all his glory. *Brown* is the substitute in the Harvard eight, and, of course, just as the race is about to begin, the stroke succumbs to bad news from home. *Brown* rushes down, takes his place in the boat, and saves the college from an ignominious defeat at the hands of the visiting English oarsmen. This boat race scene is, of course, the great feature of the play. It corresponds to the football episode in "The College Widow," and, like that famous scene, it is a splendid exemplification of modern stage management. Mr. Woodruff plays the hero extremely well, and for the first time in his career, in the racing scene, he has an opportunity to show the marvelous tattooed pictures which decorate his forearms. If Mr. Woodruff ever gets tired of acting he can easily get an engagement on the strength

of this collection as a human picture book in a dime museum.

Close on the heels of Miss Young's college play came "The Greater Love," a dramatization of the life of Mozart by Mrs. Ivy Ashton Root. Mrs. Root has taken almost as sentimental a view of the great musician as Miss Young did of her college hero, but unfortunately the hero of "The Greater Love," in making his sacrifices for the world in general and his own friends in particular, is only allowed to appear as a good deal of a fool and a great deal more of a milk-sop. La Mandini, the Roman singer, whose hopeless love for Mozart was once made the central figure of an historical novel, has been introduced by Mrs. Root as the heroine of her play. To use a racing term, she makes all the running. It is in her career rather than in Mozart's that the audience takes real interest. On the other hand, although so weak in its central characterization, Mrs. Root's play contains some charmingly pretty scenes. The dialogue is excellent throughout, and there are many indications in this maiden effort that with experience this young playwright will yet achieve something really worth while.

The most effective scene in the play occurs when *Mandini* comes to *Mozart* after she has saved his first production of "Don Giovanni,"

and shows him plainly that she loves him. *Mozart* gently but very firmly tells her that he loves her very much, but that if he once gave way to his passion for her he could never write any more great music. The woman bows to the inevitable and with a laugh turns to him as she says "Good bye," remarking, "Then you shall write my requiem." The following scene is a copy of the famous picture of *Mozart* seated in his chair with the singers grouped about him. They are singing the "Requiem" for the first



PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITE, NEW YORK

Howard Kyle as *Mozart* and Miss Kathleen Kinsella as *Constanze Weber*  
in "The Greater Love."



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALLEN, NEW YORK

A scene from "The Embassy Ball."

time. *Mandini* in the meantime has committed suicide. Howard Kyle was

this season, "Delancey" and "The Embassy Ball," Mr. Thomas has proved a

earnest and painstaking as a musician, but it was impossible for any actor to put any backbone or stamina into a rôle which the authoress had made so lamentably weak. That clever actress Miss Beverly Sitgreaves scored another success by her masterly performance of *Mandini*.

It is a pity that Lawrence D'Orsay, the English actor, has not a greater sense of humor, for if he had he would have been quicker to arrive at the all-important fact that in the new play, "The Embassy Ball," which Augustus Thomas has written for him, he is really giving a very bad burlesque of himself as he used to be in the halcyon days of his first success in "The Earl of Pawtucket." It is as unfair to Mr. Thomas as it is to himself that he should have fallen into this bad fault of over-acting, because it takes away from whatever little realism this extremely thin little comedy possesses. In his two plays



PHOTOGRAPH BY WHITE, NEW YORK

A scene from "The Greater Love"

great disappointment. He is one of the few American playwrights of whom the playgoing public expects big things. In these two works he has unquestionably fretted himself away. He is making the unfortunate mistake of supposing that bright lines—and the Thomas plays are always full of clever witticisms—can take the place of construction, characterization, and plot. In both this season's plays, his stories have been impossible and ludicrous, if you come to analyze them from any common sense point of view, and as both these plays claim to be comedies and not farces, they should be able to submit to a reasonable analysis.

In "The Embassy Ball" the hero is attached to the British Embassy at Washington. During a visit to Paris he meets an American girl, and goes with her to get a bicycle license. By mistake the official hands them a marriage license. The hero signs his name to it, but the girl, who has not told him her real name, signs the document with the name of her bosom friend, the girl who really owns the bicycle. Subsequently this license is seen by several persons, and the story gets abroad that the Englishman is married to the American girl. Eventually they meet in Washington and fall in love with each other, but the bicycle license continues to make trouble until almost the end of the chapter.

George Clark, in the rôle of a crusty Western senator, scored a hit. It was a cheering sight to see this veteran actor once more treading the boards at Daly's where he had been a prominent member of the old Daly company for more than a quarter of a century. Miss Miriam Nesbitt and Forrest Robinson were the only other members of the company who scored individually. The chief fault with the



PHOTOGRAPH BY MALLEN, NEW YORK

Lawrence D'Orsay and Miriam Nesbitt in "The Embassy Ball."

play lies in the fact that it is almost devoid of characterization. With so flimsy a story as a background it is necessary that the characters should be made at least almost human in order to carry off the situation. In this instance Mr. Thomas has only turned out so many papier-mâché stage puppets.

"The Mountain Climber," in which Francis Wilson is now appearing at the Criterion, is a comedy horse of quite another color. It is sad to have to record this fact, but it is one of the few plays of the last month written by a foreign author, and yet it is a bigger hit than any of the others. In its original German version, "The Mountain Climber" was much more



PHOTOGRAPH BY BYRON, NEW YORK

Miss Bonnie Maginn and the papposes in "The Squaw Man's Girl of the Golden West."

of a legitimate comedy than it is now. In order to suit Mr. Wilson's personality it was necessary for Leo Dietrichstein, the adapter, to introduce a great deal of horse-play and to bring it down to the level of rather violent farce, but his work has been unquestionably successful. The play is a hit. It is the best vehicle by far which Mr. Wilson has had since he forsook comic opera, but at the same time it must be confessed that it does not move him a single rung up the ladder of his ambition,

which is to be regarded and accepted as a legitimate actor and not as a buffoon. In this play, from the beginning to end, he is a clown; but then, on the other hand, there are very few clowns like Mr. Wilson, and for a jolly evening's entertainment "The Mountain Climber" may be heartily endorsed.

"The Mountain Climber" is a suburban English tradesman who has married an ambitious widow with two grown-up daughters. The widow's one ambition



PHOTOGRAPH BY HALL, NEW YORK

Francis Wilson and Company in "The Mountain Climber."

is to have for a second husband a man who is as famous as her first husband was, and in *Mr. Sigsbee* she thinks she has found the right article. During the first year of their married life he has gotten into the habit of taking week-end trips to Paris, and on his return he invariably informs her that in his private capacity of champion mountain climber he has been scaling another of the Alps. During one of these trips, in order to lend the proper local color to his story, he has

the Alps for a summer holiday. His wife has refused to rest tranquilly until she has witnessed one of his hair-raising feats with her own eyes. Poor *Sigsbee*, who has never seen a mountain before, is in an awful dilemma, and to add to his troubles the first person he encounters there, at the village inn, is the author of the book from which he stole his records. After that, of course, complications follow thick and fast. The real author finally threatens to unmask him, but a compro-



PHOTOGRAPH BY BYRON, NEW YORK

Edward J. Connelly and Miss Marie Dressler in "The Squaw Man's Girl of the Golden West."

written a series of letters describing his perilous trips. These letters he has cribbed wholesale from a new book on mountain climbing which has just been published by a well-known author. His doting spouse, wishing to give him a surprise and a suitable birthday present at the same time, takes these letters to a publisher and has them printed over his own name in a beautiful little volume of red and gold, entitled "On the Heights." In the second act, *Sigsbee* and his family have gone to

mise is effected by *Sigsbee* giving his consent to the author's marriage with one of his beautiful step-daughters.

In the rôle of the doting wife Miss May Robson has scored one of the biggest successes in her entire career. The quiet methods which she uses in making her points, form a splendid foil and contrast to Mr. Wilson's perpetual monkey-shines. At the first performance her success was so complete that the audience insisted on recalling Miss Robson to the stage in the

middle of an act. She really deserved it. It was Mr. Wilson's hope that during this engagement he would be allowed to produce the one-act play, "The Little Father of the Wilderness," in which he plays the serious rôle of a French-Canadian priest, who is suddenly summoned to the court of Louis XV. This little play has won a great deal of success in all the other cities where it has been seen, but here in New York the comedy success of

Music Hall, the management has just landed one of the biggest burlesque successes which it has had in years. Its title is "The Squaw Man's Girl of the Golden West," and it goes without saying that it is a burlesque of the two big western plays of the season. A very curious thing happened when this burlesque was produced. The first night, the piece was an outright failure. Actors and public alike were agreed on this point. The piece had not been sufficiently rehearsed, the actors did not know their lines, the jokes missed fire, and that most elephantine of all comedians, Miss Marie Dressler, seemed to be under a cloud. Fortunately for the play, however, nearly all the leading critics that night had to attend another performance. They did not see the play until its second trial. In the meantime a hard day's rehearsal had been put in, some forty-five minutes had been cut out of the dialogue, and the action of the affair had been quickened and brightened. To the amazement of the actors the piece suddenly developed into one long scream.

Miss Dressler's



PHOTOGRAPH BY BYRON, NEW YORK

Joe Weber and Lee Harrison in "The Squaw Man's Girl of the Golden West."

"The Mountain Climber" is so genuine that his manager, Charles Frohman, has forbidden Mr. Wilson to produce this serious curtain raiser in the same bill with it. He believes very wisely in leaving well-enough alone. Mr. Wilson is heart-broken, of course, but the big box-office receipts no doubt serve as a very efficient balm of Gilead.

At that cozy little playhouse, Weber's

imitation of Miss Blanche Bates as *The Girl* was acknowledged in all quarters to be an exceptionally fine piece of burlesque, and an equal share of laurels were handed out to E. J. Connelly for his really life-like imitation of Frank Keenan's sheriff, *Jack Rance*. The new piece forms a capital running mate to "Twiddle Twaddle," the musical mélange which forms the first part of this really side-splitting show.